ENTERTAINMENT / A2-4
Dollywood: Looks like Nyoy, Nina tying the knot soon

WORLD / A20
Thaksin mulls comeback as Thai premier

SPORTS / A24
Pistons whip James and Cavs, advance to East Finals

NEWS / A2
Marcos deal legitimizes plunder, says lawmaker

Whistle when in trouble, police instruct students

Jocelyn R. Uy
MetroNews

HOME BACK TO SCHOOL? When riding in a jeep or a bus, do not embed your hands out the window, especially if you're wearing jewelry or holding a cell phone.

WHISTLE A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 23, 2006 ★★ Vol. 21 / No. 164 www.inq7.net

HIV widower finds new life, love in Iloilo

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—IT HAS BEEN EIGHT YEARS BUT Dan still keeps the memory.

It was International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day and he lit a candle for his wife. He lit other candles, too, for his friends.

That was on the night of Sunday, the day the

ANYWHERE A6

Gov't must answer for all killings–CHR

Pattern shows complicity of cops, soldiers

By Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights yesterday said the government must be held accountable for the killings of activists and journalists, whether or not military or police personnel were involved.

Under human rights norms, the government is responsible for ensuring that the right to life, privacy, security of homes and public order of its citizens are respected, CHR Chair Purificacion Quisumbing told the body.

"We strongly condemn the spate of killings that have yet to be resolved and we have noted that there is a perceived pattern of the violation of the human right to life ... If several deaths happened in just a week, this constitutes a pattern of impunity," Quisumbing said.

She said her group had received 143 reports of extrajudicial killings from such cause-oriented groups as Karapatan, Bayan Muna and Anakpawis. The figure covers killings in 2001 up to March 2006.

"The pattern of complaints that came to us show members of the Armed Forces and the PNP as suspects. That has to be addressed and we call on the military to do something about it," Quisumbing said.

Quisumbing's statement comes in the wake

SOV'T MUST A6

ALLEGED communist leader Dolfin de Guzman, who was arrested in Norzagaray, Bulacan, on May 11, is presented to the media in Camp Aguinaldo.

KILLERS ignored the message on the shirt of their latest victim, local radio host Fernando Batul.

Former vice mayor 79th media fatality

By Jobelle P. Tesorio, Geraldford Tinio and Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Months ago, he bought a T-shirt bearing the slogan "Stop Killing Journalists" from a colleague, not knowing that he would later be counted among the long list of slain media persons.

Fernando "Dong" Batul, 56, a commentator of local radio station dyPR and a former vice mayor of this city, was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle at 6:35 a.m. yesterday on Valencia Street here.

He was driving his multicab on his way to work, which was 50 meters from the site of the ambush, Palawan police Senior Supt. Elpidio de Asis said.

Batul suffered 12 bullet wounds—four in the face, four in the chest, three in the back and one in the side, said Senior Insp. Jane Cordero. Police recovered .9mm slugs from a .45-cal pistol.

He was the 79th journalist killed in the Philippines since the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines.

Last week, after a journalist was beaten by a local official and a photographer was murdered, the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists renewed its concern about the safety of media people in the Philippines.

It said that the situation had gone "from bad to worse."

Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) has said in Paris that the Philippines is the most dangerous place for journalists after war-torn Iraq.

FORMER A3

Australian gov't defends Lafayette

By Volt Contreras, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Blanche S. Rivera

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY came to the defense of the Lafayette mining group after a fact-finding body urged a stop to its operations, and an Malacañang called for "fairness and restraint" in resolving the issue lest the country lose the confidence of investors.

AUSTRALIAN A6

Rebel linked to Kintanar, Tabara killings

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A MAN ALLEGED TO BE A RANKING communist party official has confessed to being involved in the assassinations of two former leftist leaders who had struck a peace deal with the government, the military said yesterday.

Of slight build and looking like a simple laborer, Delfin de Guzman wore the orange garb of a detainee and was in handcuffs when Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga presented him to media.

"He confessed that he was behind these assassinations," Senga said.

Senga was referring to the killing of ex-rebel chief Romulo Kintanar inside a Quezon City restaurant in 2003 and to the murder of former rebel leader Arturo Tabara in the parking lot of a Quezon City mall in 2004.

Standing with military escorts, the 38-year-old De Guzman—alleged acting secretary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) regional party committee in Central Luzon—looked at reporters as Senga enumerated his alleged crimes.

The reporters were not allowed to ask De Guzman questions.

Although the military said De Guzman had been in custody since he was arrested May 11 in his house in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the announcement that he was in government hands was not made until yesterday.

The announcement followed a resurgence in the killing of leftists around the country and government efforts to dispel the murders as part of purges within the CPP and the New People's Army, its military arm.

Militants blamed the killings on military agents.

Rep. Teddy Casiño of the Bayan Muna party-list pointed out that, as part of its long-standing policy, the NPA would

REBEL A6

Course for 'eco-warriors' to be offered in schools

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE LATE ENVIRONMENTAList Maximo T. Kalaw was the original eco-warrior. He was a voice in the wilderness fighting for the preservation of a rapidly disappearing Philippine wilderness.

Kalaw died in November 2001, but his work and dreams live on as students of more than 20 colleges and universities in the country are transformed into "eco-warriors" through the help of the Maximo T. Kalaw Institute for Sustainable Development (MTKISD).

"Eco-warriors are ordinary men and women who stand up for the environment. They take action and do work to ensure a healthy environment for all," says Bobon Mondejardo, executive director of the MTKISD. "This is a wonderful birthday present for Atang [whose birthday was on May 21]."

The MTKISD plans to convert the National Service Training Program (the substitute subject for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps) into a course on environmental advocacy.

The institute has trained about 200 NSTP teachers in the country in preparation for the course and has received enthusiastic responses.

Mondejardo says even some university presidents who had attended their training immediately asked for the program to be adopted in their schools.

The Polytechnic University of the Philippines is one of the schools that will teach the "eco-warriorship" course this year.

"When we start a dredging course has become exciting," Mondejardo says.

The NSTP is a required course for all college students. Under Republic Act No. 9163 (NSTP Law of 2001), students are required to take two semesters of NSTP where they render literacy and civic welfare training services.

Mondejardo says the NSTP is their opportunity to bring in Kalaw's eco-warriorship voice

COURSE A6

TOP OF THE CORDILLERA

It's not the same as conquering Mt. Everest, but members of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Outdoor Club are just as thrilled upon reaching the summit of Mt. Pulag (2,935 meters) in Benguet, the second highest mountain in the Philippines.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Refers to the weather outlook of Metro and the cities & provinces with expected cloudy, rainy, windy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy to partly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Marcos deal legitimizes plunder, says lawmaker

LAGMAN: Servitude sentiment as act of conversion

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christine O. Avendaño

ANY GOVERNMENT compromise with the family of the late President Ferdinand Marcos and his cronies on their ill-gotten wealth cases would "legitimize plunder" and open up a "veritable gold mine" for more graft and corruption by people in authority, a leading member of Congress said yesterday.

House Deputy Majority Leader Rolind Lagman said such a compromise would allow the Marcoses and their associates to openly enjoy the wealth they illegally took during Marcos' 20-year rule that ended with the dictator's ouster in 1986.

"Any amicable settlement is an act of concession which tantamount to a fair and just resolution to the country's long and arduous quest to recover Marcos-embezzled funds," Lagman said in a statement.

He issued the statement immediately after Malacañang announced its support for a plea by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to work out deals with the Marcoses and their cronies if they would help in other big or big-time plea-bargain cases against them in exchange for part of their ill-gotten wealth.

"It may be time for us to consider a compromise as a solution to these decades-old cases," Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday. "While only prosecutions and actual punishment may satisfy some of our people, we must also be realistic and acknowledge that too much time has already passed without yet reaching conviction."

Bunye said recovery, however, that any deal would have to be cleared by the courts.

Reacting to Bunye's announcement, Lagman, who is a member during the Marcos dictatorship, said, "Expediency to minimize delay is not a good reason to deepen a colossal fraud and travesties. While only prosecution and actual punishment may satisfy some of our people, we must also be realistic and acknowledge that too much time has already passed without yet reaching conviction."

"It adds insult to injury and constitutes a final slap on the victims of human rights atrocities committed by Marcos and his henchmen," he added.

Lagman said that while the PCGG may have jurisdiction to enter into compromises, Malacañang policy is to desist from any amicable settlement which would belatedly allow recovery and near-perpetuate impunity."

He added that the Supreme Court had ruled that part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos and his cronies, particularly the recent love funds, were "inextricably with public character and considered prima facie public funds."

"After fleeing exiled 20 years to fully recover not less than the vast amounts of money Marcos and his close associates stole from the country's coffers, why should Filipinos settle for less?" Lagman said.

"We have dragged our feet for too long and what is important now is to hasten the process and resolve this full amount plundered during the dictatorship by swiftly and final trial for much-needed social services and development projects," he said.

"A compromise will be a contrived detriment to efforts by the government's Ombudsman if forts to completely recover what has been robbed from the people even as it would be a veritable gold mine for corruption and a camouflage for graft," Lagman added.

Some estimates have put the Marcos wealth at at least $10 billion and the assets are believed scattered in banks in the United States, Switzerland and Liechtenstein under names of dummy foundations.

Initially Marcos will have no immune guilt issues, but neither the rest of the Marcos couple's cronies who benefited during the dictatorship have been jailed.

Bunye said that discussions on the possible compromise were ongoing and said that anything beyond that government would be "speculative at this point."

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor told reporters that a compromise would be "in the best interests of the country."

Defensor said he did not believe that President Macapagal-Arroyo had taken any position on the proposal "because the President will let the law of all in the decision-making process."

"Let's leave it at that. Let's see what the PCGG will come up with," he said.

Meanwhile, PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede suggested yesterday that Judge Jose de Jesus Mariano undertake a survey to determine how Filipinos feel about a compromise with the Marcoses and their associates.

He proposed that only one question be asked: "Are you in favor of PCGG efforts to settle with the Marcoses and their cronies?"

"I am so confident that some of them will say yes," he added.

Abcede declined to reveal details of the proposed deals with the Marcoses and Eduardo Cojuangco, who allegedly used the cronies' boy to set up a "commission" to negotiate the release of coco levy funds controlling interests in the United Coconut Planters Bank and San Miguel Corporation.

Details of deals with the Marcoses and Cojuangco will be revealed in due time, he said. *With reports from Akoni Ikpa and AP*

PCGG COMMISSIONER Ricardo Abcede (standing center) celebrated his birthday last week with no less than former First Lady Imelda Marcos (seated center) and a special guest. "What's wrong with this?" Abcede had reportedly said when it was pointed out that he was befriending with someone whose alleged stolen wealth he was supposed to recover for the nation. PCGG/CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

It's duty of the Church to speak out on issues, says new papal nuncio

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE NEW PAPAL NUNCIO TO THE Philippines is not about to discourage Filipino Catholic bishops from taking a stand on issues that concern the people.

Archbishop Fernando Filoni, 59, the duty of the Church to speak out on issues.

"Yes, of course, this is not the right" he said in response to a question on whether or not he thought Filipino bishops who were outspoken on issues like raising and Church's change should continue to be so.

"Jesus became a man and in becoming a man he assumed a body, taking care not only of souls but also of the bodies. And miracles were done, not only healing the souls but the words of the people, but also looking after the poor. So this is an essential part of the Church; the Church without this aspect is half of the Church," the 59-year-old archbishop said.

"So it is also my duty to encourage the bishops, to help them, as this time in all these social aspects which concern the Filipino people, especially the poor," he added.

Filoni spoke to reporters after he had lunch with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang following his presentation of credential like to her in a simple ceremony yesterday.

The nuncio, whose prior assignment was in civil-war-torn Iraq, was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to replace Archbishop Antonio Franco, who in turn was posted to the Middle East.

Malacañang Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita accompanied Filoni to Malacañang.

The papal envoy said he was pleased to be in the country.

"I will now be able to share [being] among the Filipino people, to appreciate their talent, and, sometimes, culture, history everywhere, in many islands, but also the beauty of the people here," he said.

He also said he was "touched" by President Arroyo's sensitiveness."

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the President and Filoni talked about his postings in Iraq and, earlier, Cuba.

"He [Filoni] mentioned that [while] most governments pushed for birth control, divorce, the death penalty... so the Philippines these days were in consonance with Catholic teachings," Defensor said.

Asked if he and the President talked about the Filipino bishops' stand against raising, Filoni said they did not delve into the subject.

And what did he think of the local bishops' opposition to amending the Constitution at this time to change the form of government?

He replied that he knew that the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines had given a statement on this.

"I respect their opinions, which is quite understandable," Filoni said.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO meets with Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, (left) the new Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Archbishop Fernando Filoni, and CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo at the Rizal Hall in Malacañang Monday. CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

Bishop pours out frustration over 'jueteng' in book

By Christian V. Esguerra

WITH THE RESURGENCE OF "jueteng" in many parts of the country, it might do well for the public to get hold of the book gambling lord Archbishop Oscar G. Cruz wrote last year. Fingers out his frustrations over the pervasive underground lottery.

"Gambling in the Republic" was quietly released last last year during the time Cruz and his undiscerning group, dismissing Bayan Luksa ng Sambayan, were complaining that the Illegal numbers game was slowly making a comeback.

Earlier, in May 2005, the Lingayen-Dagupan prelate invited the jueteng controversy by announcing that the game had become synonymous to government under the arroyo administration.

Several Senate investigations followed, all revealing the extent of Jueteng's influence in the Philippine National Police and the national and local governments.

"I have no regrets," Cruz told the Inquirer in a phone interview on Sunday, referring to his role in the Senate investigations. He said that he could not do more.

"I'm just intrigued by the tenacity and tolerance of the administration and those could be unconditional reasons for this attitude," he said.

Written from the 1998 Director Edward Arthur Lindblair case during last week that jueteng was back, Cruz said he was hoping his book would keep the fire of the advocacy going.

The 215-page book explores the Filipino as a "culture of gambling."

Cruz does not buy the idea that Filipinos are as the many gambling, which is "an addictive humanity."

"The more a hardened apparatchik wrote, the more dangerous it becomes," he wrote in the book, referring to the many ways in which we gambling.

While there is no gambler is difficult to recognize considering its huge amounts, he said another problem arises when "citizens are willing, but willing, by willing and dreaming as well."

That is further bolstered by some members of the media who back gambling, both legal and illegal, he said, citing the case of the now-ex Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. Pagcor.

"It is not a secret that [such] are [media] practitioners and commentators who are considerably pro-Pagcor in their writings and remarks," he wrote.

"It is possible that they are sure in command of the righteousness of Pagcor, truly persuaded by its [Pagcor's] unassailing moral objectives and national relevance.

"But considering that [here] are substantial and consistent, we are justifiably the same [skeptical] as to other [than Pagcor is the sense behind their consistent protective and manic, steady praise] positions in favor of the government/private corporate gambling arm."

Abenojar's wife insists hubby first on Everest

By Kristin Pigaglo

MAVERICK MOUNTAINEER DALE ABENOJAR is still gathering the evidence that would prove he was the first Filipino to summit Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world at 29,035 feet.

"We are gathering evidence and we will present it to you soon," said Abenojar's wife Lisa in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

Lisa said her husband was "in transit to Kathmandu, Nepal," and was expected to arrive there yesterday.

Lisa, however, declined to give any details of her husband's feat, saying she "did not want to list the controversy."

Last Friday, Lisa Abenojar issued a statement claiming that her husband had "successfully" reached the summit of Mt. Everest via its North face in Tibet on May 11, two days before Lou Omacion of the Team Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (TPMEE) summited Everest, becoming the first Filipino woman to have conquered the mountain.

Omacion climbed Everest on its south side in Nepal. He was followed in the summit the next day, May 13, by his colleague in the TPMEE, Edwin "Pastor" Tenorio. On May 19, Ronie Garcilano, a solo climber, became the third Filipino known to have made it to "the roof of the world."

Lisa Abenojar said her husband "returned to the base camp around 9 p.m. Tibet time on May 18 ... Dale Abenojar was one of the four Filipino climbers on Mt. Everest. But unlike the others, he climbed independently and without any sponsors or outside backing him up. He left last April 1 with his manager-cameraman."

Omacion and Tenorio were backed by the ABS-CBN television network while Garduce was supported by GMA 7. They also had other corporate and individual sponsors, like Legaki Lucio Tan for the PPMEE mountaineers.

According to the website mountaineer.ati.net, "details are sketchy" on Abenojar's feat "until a complete report and proof is expected from the climber within the week."

Another website, everestnews.com, said Abenojar was headed for Kamarajo, with a stopover in Tokyo, Osaka, and a summit ceremony. The website also said the truth about Abenojar's claim would be known "in a few days."

Climbing Everest has been Dale's lifelong dream. He was the first Filipino to publicly announce his intent to climb it way back in 1994. But it's not that important at this point who was the first on Mt. Everest as all four Filipino summiteers are equally deserving of honor and admiration. It showcases the Filipinos' will, skill and sheer stubbornness to achieve great heights in the field of alpine mountaineering. All four of them deserved and portrayed it...and each has his own genuine spirit and inspiring character," Lisa Abenojar said.

5 pro-Erap leaders abducted

By DJ Yap

FIVE LEADERS OF A MILITANT ORGANIZATION closely associated with deposed President Joseph Estrada were abducted by heavily armed men for still unknown reasons in Quezon City yesterday.

Officials of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice were meeting inside an unlocked chair for Dantayan's house at 40 E-4 between 7 Uniter and Judge Jimenez Streets in Kamuning at 9:30 p.m. when the men barged into the compound.

Linggoy Abuan, a former campaign aide of Estrada's buddy, the late actor and presidential contender Fernando Poe Jr., identified those abducted as Ricmundo, Jim Calumnian, Ruben Dimanlig, Jose Corumang and Jessie Dionisio.

Arnel Ding in Dantayan's wife Myrna, evidently identifying themselves as the armed men began rounding up the UMDJ leaders, slapping, punching and clubbing them.

"This is political harassment," the claim might Myrna said, but she added that it was too early to accuse the government, or the police and military, of having a hand in the abduction.

One by one, the UMDJ leaders were ordered to sit on their bellies, with long firearms trained at them, and were pushed or kicked when they tried to resist, Myrna said.

"They were treated like criminals. There was no arrest warrant, and nobody even bothered to introduce himself. They only said they called was either the police leaders or in duties," she said.

The UMDJ leaders were then taken, one after the other, to the airports' waiting vehicles parked outside, taking about 20 minutes, she added.

Neighbors took note of the airports' vehicles, a cream Nissan sedan, with plate numbers WFG 165, a green van, with plate numbers 479 106 letters were hidden from view), and a Toyota Corolla, with plate numbers WFH 167, Abuan said.

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SUBIC RAPE TRIAL

3 times a week starting next Friday to beat deadline

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

IN ORDER TO MEET THE JUDGE'S SELF-IMposed deadline, the trial of four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman last year will be held three times a week starting next Friday, June 2, At least one witness will be presented in court during the hearings.

Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 150 Judge Benjamin Pozon set marathon hearings on the Subic rape case during a preliminary conference yesterday, saying he would like to finish by August the trial of Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier, Lance Cpls. Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantier and Daniel Smith.

A Filipino woman had accused the servicemen of conspiring to rape her on board a van parked under the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 last year.

"This June, we will hold the hearings three times a week, but if we have not presented enough number of witnesses by the end of August, we will have to [hold hearings] five times a week," Pozon said during a conference with prosecution and defense lawyers yesterday.

The hearings would be held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the motor-pool arena session hall at the old Makati City Hall building. It is the same hall borrowed by the Makati RTC for hearings on the coup d' etat case against junior military officers staged in leaders of the July 27, 2003 takeover of the Oakwood Premier apartment hotel in Makati City.

"We'll do our best to finish this ... There should be one witness a day, and you should be ready with at least two witnesses so in case the other one is absent, the other one could be presented," Pozon told lawyers during the proceedings.

Media interests and executives would not be allowed inside the courtroom, but with the concurrence of both camps, Pozon allowed reporters to cover the hearings bringing only pen and paper.

"The marathon hearings, while ideal, can also prejudice the prosecution because we have very little time to prepare. The [schedule] might just affect our case because of the extreme pressure as we try to speed up the process," prosecutor Evelyn Deniz told reporters.

Lawyer Jose Jacinto, counsel for Silkwood, meanwhile had no problem with the schedule.

"That's just reasonable, considering the number of witnesses they have ... Of course our clients have a right to a speedy trial. That's why we want this to be finished," he said.

Pozon required prosecution and defense lawyers to present to court on Friday's pretrial hearing the order of witnesses, for both camps, in for many of which witness to testify on for every hearing day. This would prevent lawyers from seeking postponements in the event the adverse panel presented surprise witnesses.

Norbert Ben, Rose Sagalong, meanwhile, has asked Pozon to the Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for contempt because of statements he made allegedly showing his bias for the US Marines.

Sagalong, who is one of the complainant's private counsels, filed a motion on May 12, asking Pozon to order Gonzalez to step withdraw with the rape case due to his "clear conflict of interest, in order to protect the rights and interests of the people and private complainant and to prevent the miscarriage of justice."

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Gov't must answer for all killings, says CHR

Front page 1

of Europarmin's review of all activities during their President Macapagal-Arroyo's statement on, Nov 10 2005, Europarmin's review of the records showed 1011, not 504, killings.

"That everybody is to be blamed but it's a commander for killings in his area happening, even if he's not really involved, it is his responsibility. The killings should stop," she said.

NPA also suspect

Lifted groups had pointed to Mid. Gen. Jovito Palparan as the main instigator of attacks, kidnappings and the forging Monitoring Mobilization Bureau had noted that the killings of activists increased when two Palparan was assigned.

Quintanilla said the commission had also received information that in some cases, the communist New People's Army was the suspect.

"We wouldn't rule out also where either the killer are. Is the government is helpless?" Quintanilla said, referring to the continued killings and the slow pace of identification of those behind them.

To human rights teams, the government is still responsible even if persons in authority are not those behind the killings. The government is still responsible in preserving the right to life and the security of homes and public order and property," the CHR said.

Quintanilla said the CHR will conduct hearings to further gather information on the killings and the involvement of either persons in authority or other armed groups.

"This is a good time for the government to make good its pledge to the United Nations when the Philippines ran for a seat in the newly formed United Nations Human Rights Council," she said.

Quintanilla said the OHR would release its findings on whether the government had made good on its promises.

Patterns of abuse

"There is an emerging patterns of grave violations of human rights and a failure of the justice system," she said.

"We are not condemning the government. But yet. But one wonders why these killings are not being stated upon," she added.

Quintanilla said the commission appreciated President Macapagal-Arroyo's order for an investigation and the Department of the Interior and Local Government's efforts to find the killers.

European, however, is skeptical unimpressed. It said it would not cooperate with the DILG-DND's Task Force Ituig. This followed the FEP position's statement that it had yet to see a pattern of military involvement and security officials' claims that the slayings were part of a purge of communist ranks.

"We are not only skeptical about Task Force Ituig's formation, but we also doubt that it can thoroughly investigate the cases," European secretary general Mark Hilse-Enriquez said.

Witch hunt

European said the probe had turned into a "witch hunt and a bizarre for the red-tags system" by European Secretary Raymundo Ernida and National Security Adviser Roilberto Gonzales.

From his exile in Utrecht in the Netherlands, Jose Ma. Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said that Task Force Ituig's principle was behind the killings "and meant to justify more deaths and to vilify the communist movement.

"While there is caution in its methods, the Aquino regime itself is overwhelmingly more mad than motivated and to see it as simply protecting political turmoil, contrary to its historical being able to justify and prevent the country," said Sison, chief political consultant of the CPP-led National Democratic Front.

Blasted by Sison, the regime several times in order to keep itself in power through sheer violence and deception. It is, in fact, driving the broad masses of the people and revolutionary forces in unity and engage in all forms of struggle," he said.

Australian gov't defends Lafayette mining project

Front page 1

Peter Secretary Ignacio Bunyi referred to the waste discharge method as "the best available technology" for the Australian firm Lafayette Philippines Inc. as a mere "operational flaw" that could be corrected through anti-pollution measures.

Bunyi assured Secretary Angelo Reyes' report to fly to Puyo-Puyo Island to fellay today to "validate" the findings of the Puyo-Puyo Fact Finding Commission.

The Cherchell commission recommended the cancelled ten of the environmental compliance certificate issued to Lafayette but the company disputed the body's findings as conclusive.

"A blanket ban on mining in Puyo-Puyo and other operations throughout the Philippines would deprive the country of thousands of jobs, significant economic growth, enormous local community development, huge tax revenues and international investor confidence," the Australian Embassy said.

Requirements met

Australian ambassador Tony Bury in a statement, said: "I am advised that the Lafayette mining company has met all compliance requirements mandated by the Philippine government in the aftermath of the incidents last October.

"I strongly encourage the Philippine government to meet allow Lafayette to commence testing operations as soon as possible so that all stakeholders can judge, on an objective and scientific basis, whether the Puyo-Puyo mining operation is now in a position to meet the government's appropriately high standards and safeguards," he said.

Lafayette has asked the government to allow a test run of its gold-processing facility on Puyo-Puyo to show that it had put in place the remedial measures (sequestrations it would be allowed to resume operations.

Ensure safety

"The key in Puyo-Puyo, as elsewhere, is to ensure that mining operations are safe. It is operated, regulated and respected. Mr. Yulo said.

But in a new threat to the mining sector, the communist New People's Army yesterday vowed to step up attacks on mining firms and wage guerilla wars in the northern Ilalaya mountains, Reuters reported.

"The undampened mining activities in Ilalaya will destroy the environment and deprive the indigenous people of their resources through deception," an NPA statement said.

Among the targets the NPA vowed to hit were mines run by Canadian Exploration Inc., Highland Resources Inc. and Hidalgo Mining Co. Inc.

The fact-finding commission, headed by Senegalese Bishop Isaiah Rodes, also called for a review of the Mining Act, especially its provisions on ownership of mining companies and operations.

Benefits from mining

"We respect the views of the good bishop and we share his concern to see the environment," Bunyi told reporters. "However, we must deal with investment with fairness and reason lest we lose the social interest's sector."

He said projects in the mining sector "bring in good paying jobs for our people and the development of our communities."

"All in all, the record of mining investments in the Philippines has been considerable and visibly rewarding," he said.

Bunyi said that if there were any "operational flaws" to be rectified and wrongs to be set right, "then by all means the government shall enforce the laws to protect the public interest."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had obtained the assurances of the ODSB that it would act on any operational flaws immediately to avoid a repeat of previous incidents.

Final say

"This will be decided at the Supreme level," Bunyi told Reporters.

Bunyi, who will have the final say on whether or let Lafayette resume gold-processing operations after five months of suspension, said he had studied the Reuter commission's report over the weekend.

"We acknowledge the painstaking effort of the commission ... They gave excellent and insightful observations but we must continue to validate the report," Bunyi said.

He said he would try to get input from the management of Lafayette, the local government of Puyo-Puyo, Sehedfish and even fact-finders to "come up with the right position on the company."

Not matter of compromise

"This is not a matter of compromise but of determining what's best for the country and the persons majority. There are certain issues that cannot be compromised," Bunyi said.

"We will labor only responsible mining, and at the same time, we must also recognize the fact that natural resources must be developed for our people," he said.

Militant groups have accused Mabuhaying of forcing the Reuter fact-commission just to appease the Catholic Bishop Conference of the Philippines, which issued a pastoral statement only this year seeking a stop to large-scale mining by foreign firms.

Congress hearing

The House of Representatives committee on environment and natural resources will resume that month to congressional probe into the Lafayette mine tailings spill.

Party-list Representatives Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis and Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan and House Minority Leader Francis Escudero had sought the resumption of the inquiry.

Several pronouncements lawmakers wanted a total ban on mining would deprive the country of much needed economic support and jobs.

Baron report crucial

Mariano said reports the Reuter commission's findings would override the commission with crucial empirical data on which it could base its "decisive and to vitally the environment movement.

"While there is caution in its methods, the Aquino regime itself is overwhelmingly more mad than motivated and to see it as simply protecting political turmoil, contrary to its historical being able to justify and prevent the country," said Sison, chief political consultant of the CPP-led National Democratic Front.

Blasted by Sison, the regime several times in order to keep itself in power through sheer violence and deception. It is, in fact, driving the broad masses of the people and revolutionary forces in unity and engage in all forms of struggle," he said.

LAFAYETTE'S mining site—One of the government's flagship projects is now at the center of controversy over environmental concerns. AP PHOTO

Luring investors

Reacting to statements by some Malacañang officials that the Cut-Binding commission had "overstepped its mandate, Representative Gilda Teves said: "Here one a recommendation to review the Mining Act be an abuse of discretion when Speaker Jose de Venecia himself committed the House to integrate the recommendations of the panel [in a version] of the Mining Act?"

Rep. Edwards Velasco of Leyte and Rep. Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City said that with mining, the country would be able to build its infrastructure.

Velasco said businessmen had projected that the mining industry could infuse P27 billion to P225 billion in investment and generate about 240,000 jobs in six years.

Too good to miss

"We cannot let this opportunity pass," he said.

Domogan said the country's aim to achieve rapid progress did not mean that economic opposite values in the environment would be sacrificed.

"Good policy direction and laws will set the balance which will result in benefits for the people," he said.

He stressed that the mining industry offered numerous benefits to the country and to the people.

"But mining from start strictly comply with our laws to protect our people and environment. This is what the Palace means when it declared that social justice can go hand in hand with economic growth," he said. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Whistle when in trouble, police instruct students

Front page 1

Shopping for school supplies? Don't forget to add an anti-rape whistle on the list.

Pharmacy drug chain said hung out in the mall? Do not talk or argue with strangers.

Tired, news Chief Rene Epe in Robert Pulgahan's All Pacific Secondary Rules. I. I. I

THE SISTERS of Jessel Amisola-radio commentator Fernando Batul-cry over the body of their brother.

LAWMEN secure the area where Batul was gunned down on Valencia Street in Puerto Princesa City.

Former vice mayor 79th media fatality

Front page A1

Batul, who earned the moniker "Boanerges ng Bayan," was on his way to host his program "Isumbong mo kay Batul" on the dyPR station owned by Palawan Broadcasting Corp. when he was attacked.

A witness reported that the gunmen, on a blue Honda XRM motorcycle, were wearing dark helmets, the police said.

Batul had been receiving death threats. A month ago, two grenades were thrown at his house but did not explode. The attacker left a note saying "it (life) is for travelkillers."

Reward

Chief Police Supt. Zoilo Gonzalo immediately created a multi-agency task force to look into the killing and appointed Dr. Arlyn Arbalate C.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn gave the police 48 hours to solve the case. He also put up a P500,000 reward for the arrest of the suspects.

Asked if the killing was related to Batul's work as a broadcaster, Gonzalo said: "Most probably. But we are looking deeply into this case."

He noted that one weeks before grenades were found at his home, Batul interviewed a certain Ka Marlon, said to be a leader of the New People's Army in Palawan.

Hagedorn, who had many quarrels with Batul in the past, told dyPR that he was saddened by the death of the commentator.

"I have always sought the position of Dong Batul ever since because if something happened to him, I would profit. He (Batul) is no blamer, and it would not be good for the image of Puerto Princesa," the mayor said.

Local fame

"I would never even do that. It's not my line," he said.

The family of Batul rushed to the Cooperative Hospital where the lawmaker was taken. Supporters, foes and friends likewise were there to see their "local radio driver" for the last time.

Another two said Batul had helped them in their lives through his program modeling the Senpediano concoctions of his wife Jacklyn.

Many listeners said Batul had a genuine heart for the poor and had given them hope.

Batul started his radio stint at dyPR when he was studying at Palawan State College.

He became the information officer of the Crocodile farming institute and had a broadcasting program "Ruling in Riddle" in 1997 over GMA-Super Radyo.

When he became temporarily popular, he ran for this station of this city in 2001 and even lost but was restored from office in 2003 after an electoral protest was filed by now Vice Mayor Lucilo Bayron.

Batul again ran for vice mayor in 2004 but lost to Bayron.

His program got the highest rating in the latest Kapisanan ng Brodkasters ng Pilipinas Radio Research Council survey. With reports from Lucjo A. del Puerto, AP, AFP and PEI Research

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HIV widower finds new life, love in Iloilo

It stopped it

would haunted the memory of those who died of AIDS.

Dan, 35, lost his wife to AIDS in 1999. Four years ago, he HIV-positive but he, too, had the virus that caused the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

Dan is now in the Philippine registry of more 2,600 people with HIV. The list grows each month.

The registry contains only 20 percent of the names of persons living with HIV/AIDS—referred to as PLWHAs, for short. Experts say there could be as many as 11,000 people who either do not know they have the virus or refuse to say publicly that they have it.

One of the first in Western Visayas to come out in the open, Dan is encouraging others to do it, too, by example.

"We should not be afraid to because there is much common those days, unlike before. Help is also available from the government and nongovernment organizations," he said.

Outcast, even when dead

Fearing he might end up an outcast, it took Dan five years to publicly disclose his condition. He was also afraid of the media then.

It is not easy to leave the island town.

A hospital here requires HIV-positive patients to take home their own linens.

One family kept a separate set of tableware for an ailing member until they were told that HIV could not be transmitted by saliva.

In one town, parents refused to hold a wake for their son in their own house.

One PDPHA recalled an interview with a reporter who asked: "How come you have AIDS when you're pretty?"

There is no known cure for AIDS, which is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus can be spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk.

Fighting the virus

It can be transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse with an HIV-positive partner, blood transfusion (mostly in other Asian countries), the use of contaminated needles, syringes and skin-piercing equipment. And mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, birth or breast-feeding.

HIV weakens the body's immune system until it can no longer fight infection.

An undetermined (HIV) dormancy is a long nightmare that closes the virus' replication in the body. Dan has been on ARV since 2003.

Infected by needle

Dan's wife died a few days before Christmas in 1998. She was a nurse in the United States in 2000 when she was accidentally pierced by an infected needle used by a colleague while they were tending to an HIV-positive patient.

She came back to the Philippines in 1992, hoping to bring the whole family to the United States as immigrants. They were all set to go but a final requirement called for Dan and his wife to get medical checkups.

The results showed she was HIV-positive.

Daughter finds out truth

Their plans to migrate crashed. Dan's wife stayed to work in Manila while Dan returned to Iloilo. Their 2nd year old daughter, who Dan lately was denied US visa.

Six years later, one of them five children, a nursing student, read his diagnosis of her sick mother.

Dan's wife tried to appeal her case to be allowed to remain in the United States to demand damages and compensation from her employer, but to no avail. This made her father of future. Dan said.

When she died, Dan's in-laws asked him to stay with them in Manila and lead a revival group.

"They thought I would die soon afterward. But that is not the life I wanted to have. I want to tell people about HIV/AIDS and how this can be prevented," he said.

Giving help

Back in Iloilo, Dan set up a business producing the lighted boxes used to view X-ray films. His clients included hospitals and physicians who, on learning he had his virus, made sure he was given no business.

"They thought I would die soon afterward. But that is not the life I wanted to have. I want to tell people about HIV/AIDS and how this can be prevented," he said.

Giving help

Back in Iloilo, Dan set up a business producing the lighted boxes used to view X-ray films. His clients included hospitals and physicians who, on learning he had his virus, made sure he was given no business.

He learned an industrial network of people with HIV and AIDS, many of them students. He visited them, spoke to their families, and gave them information on the nature of HIV and AIDS.

Department of Health nurse Charity Sison said Bal Oasis Quezon City is the center to know all PLWHAs who needed help. Families of other sufferers sought his advice.

"He really pushed for the organization of self-help groups for PLWHAs," said Sison.

Dan is no longer active with the local nonprofit list of PLWHAs, but he still visits some of them and contributes to the families of those who had died.

An inner peace

Now he is at peace with himself. What the illness struck him and his wife, he has his faith to find. He undergoes in Church regularly.

In 2000, his advocacy earned him a trip to Australia, where he learned more about how to work with communities to educate them on HIV/AIDS.

And he has both tended the sick. He's sure two said another visit. He met a woman, also HIV-positive, who became his sweetheart. Like Dan, she is also a counselor and active in HIV/AIDS programs.

They plan to live and spend the rest of their lives together.

DOH DrB-mish Bantic (center) shares his story with Iloilo reporters during a workshop on HIV/AIDS reporting organized by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines. — CESAR RAMIREZ

Rebel leader linked to Kintanar, Tabara killings

To page A-3

publicly acknowledge its responsibility for its fighters' error to redress the attacks.

A total of 11 militants have been killed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took office in 2001, according to an incomplete tally based on its own reports and on reports of Bayan Muna and the Karapatan human rights group.

Among those killed in 2001 were Tabara and Tabara, former leader of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA/ABB), broke ties with the CPP in 1992.

The RPA claimed responsibility for their deaths.

Songa's secrets

Dr Gutierrez had a consulting room rear-seat for murder, according to police files.

Songa was joined by Reporter Dexter Cabalza and Rodolfo Kintanar Jr. of the Philippine National Police where Dr Gutierrez was presented to the press in Camp Aguinaldo.

Songa refused to elaborate on Dr Gutierrez's alleged role in the killings of Kintanar and Tabara.

"There are other things we learned from his statements but we should keep those in the meantime so as not to jeopardize follow-up operations," he said.

Anti-GMA plot

Songa refused to link Dr Gutierrez's arrest to the military's claim that communist guerrillas were behind the recent murders of leftist activists in the Cabanatuan City area.

"Then [Dr Gutierrez's arrest] has nothing to with the issue. He was arrested because he was wanted and there is a warrant," Songa said.

Medina would be link Dr Gutierrez to the supposed assassination plot against Ms Arroyo involving rebels-first National Security Adviser Roilberto Evangelista spoke of last week.

Songa said a 40-cal. pistol, ammunition and rebel documents were seized from Dr Gutierrez.

No charges

The Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) said the charges was the suggestion in Tabara's murder and a "backup" gunman when Kintanar was shot.

The body would not identify the other assailants.

The AFP Public Information Office would clear the military of its hand in its custody Philip Limjoco, alleged head of the Sth special open-source groups.

Nearly two weeks after his arrest, Dr Gutierrez has not been formally charged with Tabara's and Kintanar's murders. He is also related to Camp Aguinaldo based on the warrant issued by a Bulacan judge, officials said.

The military also implicated Dr Gutierrez in the killings of former BSP governor Jose Bulacan police were said a woman Pastora Delfin and his wife; the framing of a prominent farmer in Binangonan in 2004, extortion from local businessmen, and attacks on military detachments and telecommunications towers in Bulacan.

Where is Linjuco?

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal last week demanded that the AFP immediately release Limjoco, who has been reported missing for more than a week.

According to Rosal, the NPA had received reports that Limjoco was being held by Isafp.

Limjoco was one of about 50 people charged with rebellion in connection with an alleged assassination plot against President Arroyo by rightist and communist forces to topple the Arroyo administration. With a report from Jeffrey T. Mallari Jr. and Nestor Burgos

CPP purges closed book, says Satur

BAYAN MUNA PARTYLIST REPresentative Satur Ocampo said Rabbi Cesar yesterday challenged the accuracy of a military report on some graves in Bulacan supposedly containing the bodies of kidnapped communist rebels and sympathizers.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon had blamed the "invasion" on the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Ocampo said that the bloody purges of the early years of the party and carried out by the New People's Army in the 1970s and 1980s were a closed book.

"Crusader's claim ... is without any factual basis. The only basis Gonzales has is the testimony of Honorio Poblete, a self-confessed anti-national information from the AFP ... and his self-serving anti-communist bias," Ocampo said.

"Bayan Muna rejects Gonzales's claim altogether. It aims to destroy the revolutionary movement that Bayan Muna is a CPP front and thus our members are prime targets of AFP purges."

Castro said the purges had long been admitted by the CPP leadership.

"It had been considered a chapter closed on their part. I doubt if they will be making the same mistake because any right-thinking movement which already condemned these atrocities would not defend the same again," he said. — Marlon Ramos

Course for 'eco-warriors' ...

To page A-4

through the Integral Citizenship Building Program (ICBP).

The two students engage in seminars on the concept of human and ecological security and join them with the knowledge and skills to work for a better world, their new investing in the future," she adds.

Mendiola says they have developed a program that includes sessions on exploring Philippine biodiversity and why it has to be conserved.

Among the issues that are tackled in the course are Mindoro-type Cagayan Mining (Rapu-rapu) mall, logs spill in Marinduque, the vanishing dugongs, high-yielding rice varieties and eco-sensitive.

Other eco-warriors

Enlow's leadership is a tough act to follow. He founded Haribon Foundation which, numerous, placed from a bird-watching society into one of the largest environmental nongovernment organizations in the Philippines.

He has also dedicated his programs related to sustainable development and founded the Philippine Institute of Alternative Forces and Green Forum Philippines.

Another eco-warrior looking fully to continue the legacy of the ICBP program is Dr. Aida Rillanpat, a chemical engineer who became an activist nun and started Tanglad Tree Rallisation.

Marking Today, the Rallisation pals were planted in the hill in the opposite to the Quezon Bridge project that would have refounded the mangroves during the Marcos regime, sensitive ecosystem model.

Sisters were to visit the Inform Community Food Security Program (ICFSP) project by organized by Sister Hedda Bright for its stewardship, and Cebu Uniting for Sustainable Water Foundation is organizing.

Heal the earth

Aside from ecosystem-making, and conservation of the salt and body and what you heal the earth, you also heal yourself," she says.

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Miriam dares fellow pols: Show true colors now

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO wants fellow legislators who plan to run for president in 2010 to declare their intentions now so the people would know why they are for or against amending the Constitution.

"The Constitution recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. Hence, the public has a right to know what legislators oppose the shift to a parliamentary system, particularly if they plan to run in 2010 under a presidential system," Santiago said.

At the same time, Santiago urged the Senate to conduct public consultations on constitutional amendments that Congress can amend the Charter without acting as a constituent assembly.

The committee's chair, Sen. Richard Gordon, and vice chairman of the Senate-House committee on propos amendments to the Charter in the same way their court have except that constitutional amendments will have to be ratified through a plebiscite. Gordon has said he plans to propose this method to his counterpart, Rep. Constantino Jacosalem, when they meet on Tuesday.

Santiago has made controversial statements putting her on a collision course with other senators since she joined President Macapagal-Arroyo in her reconciliation visit to Saudi Arabia.

Among other things, she said she would vote for the abolition of the Senate and join a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution even if the other senators refuse to take part.

"I humbly submit that based on sound jurisprudence, constituent power is not part of the legislative power conferred on Congress," she said, disputing Gordon's assertion that Congress can propose constitutional amendments just as it drafts new legislation. "Constituent power is a sovereign will of the people, who delegate it through the Constitution to any government department they choose—executive, legislative or judicial."

Santiago cited the 1976 case headed vs. Comelec where Chief Justice Enrique Fernando stressed the distinction between legislative and constituent powers of Congress as expressed in the 1935 Constitution.

But Gordon's committee cited the 1987 Constitution, which states in Article 17 that any amendment to or revision of the Constitution may be proposed by "the Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members," a unicameral body.

"You cannot refer a problem by ignoring it. If the ordinary legislative procedure is followed, without convening a constituent assembly, the least would eventually reach the Supreme Court. We may as well let the court to settle it now, rather than subtle at the fringes of the problem," Santiago said.

Prospects for La Mesa housing getting dimmer

By TJ Burgonio

THE HOA APPEAR TO BE stacked against the relocated employees of the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System (MWSS) who are facing the opposition of environmentalists to the construction of their homes within the scenic, forested La Mesa Dam watershed.

The sprawling 28-hectare housing site lies within a critical area of the watershed and, if getting approval, is slated to host homes to be occupied by the residents would run to the millions of pesos. Sen. Pia Cayetano said yesterday.

The 3,700-hectare watershed is the source of water for Metro Manila's 12 million residents.

"While the constitution recognizes the right of the employees to the housing project—of which they had been deprived for decades, including the first family of retired General Jose Almonte—it should be considered along with the interest of Metro Manila residents who depend on La Mesa for potable water," said Cayetano, chair of the Senate committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture.

Sustainable development dictates that there should be a balance between social progress and environmental protection and we urge all parties to work together for a viable solution," she said.

Quoting the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (Namria), Cayetano said the proposed housing project lies close to the La Mesa reservoir, a fact that was corroborated by MWSS officials.

"The best of conservation is a distant possibility," Cayetano said in the statement.

At her Tuesday's inquiry into the housing project by the Senate committee on environment, Manila District Engr. Elias Salonga admitted the project "has some bearing on the rise" of the HOA.

The project, which would benefit 1,411 MWSS retirees and their families, generated controversy after the Save the La Mesa Dam Coalition raised a host concerns constructive because of the threat it posed to the watershed.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 15, 2006
Talk About It Online

1st Reading: Acts 16:22-34
Gospel: John 16:5-11

Jesus said to his disciples, "But now I am going to the One who sent me and none of you asks me where I am going. Instead you are overcome with grief because of what I have said.

"Indeed believe me: it is better for you that I go away, because as long as I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go away, it is to send him to you, and when he comes, he will convict the world in fact of the world with regard to sin, to the way of righteousness, and to the judgment.

"What has been, for me," Boy did not believe in me. What is the way of righteousness? I am on the way to the Father, and you will not see me. What Judgment? The Ruler of this world has himself been condemned."

Comment/Note:

Spirit: The Holy Spirit (Paraclete) will convict the person and Gospel, but their choice drop from them and they become free. The latter is distinguish but becomes a believer, along with the household, and he becomes their servant.

Jesus' words are to comfort, yet they speak the reality of hard times they will have. Both the world and we, the world. He sends the Paraclete, the comforter to them, and it is the Spirit that gives the world wrong about sin, justice and condemnation. His work was in the power of man and judgment in the world. They will know both the cross with and the celebration of Pentecost.

Sacred Scripture Text: New American Bible, Revised Edition, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, N.Y. Nihil Obstat: Rev. Msgr. Peter A. Dunn, S.T.D., Censor Librorum. Imprimatur: Most Rev. Edwin F. O'Brien, D.D., Archbishop for the Military Services, USA. March 17, 2006.

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Sharp decline in English skills threatens economy

FOR DECADES THE TROUBLED Philippine economy has been able to bank on one key asset in attracting foreign investors—proficiency in the English language.

In recent years, it has helped with outsourcing contracts in the booming business process and call center sectors, one of the few areas of the nation's economy that is actually expanding.

But even that lifeline appears a tenuous one as fears surface over a sharp decline in English, compounded by failing school standards and a stark number of linguistically skilled graduates.

Business leaders are starting to question just how long the country can go on trading in English skills.

Some local and foreign business groups are so concerned they have started their own language centers to fill the gaps left by the deficiencies in schools.

The European Chamber of Commerce warned recently that 75 percent of the country's annual 400,000 college graduates have "sub-standard English skills." While an number of months, especially in English and math, to farmer-paying jobs overseas, the country's education system is fast slowing.

Senator Edgardo Angara recently described the deficiencies of the country's school system as a "failing hands." "We have practically squandered our intellectual capital," he said in a speech.

He said that in all international achievement tests, the Philippines is rated near the bottom in all subjects.

"That is reflected in the low performance of our education students both in public and private schools," Official achievement tests given to graduating high school students in the 2004-2005 school year showed that only 6.56 percent could read, speak and comprehend English well enough to solve college-level 60.25 percent had no English skills at all.

Rolando Tolibas, who filed a bill in 2004 to make English the medium of instruction at all levels in schools, has warned that the rapid decline in English competency would "eventually erode the competitiveness of the country's human resources, both here and abroad, in an increasingly globalized village." His bill is still sitting in the House of Representatives gathering dust.

"The employment of Filipinos overseas will cease by cowfokes in Orion and India," Tolibas said, assuring that Filipino engineers in the Middle East risk being dislodged by Indians and Chinese engineers who not only speak better English, but analysts and technicians in English better.

Concerned with the decline in education, especially in English, the American and European chambers of commerce have begun to institute training programmes in an attempt to reverse the trend.

The European Chamber, along with local business groups, recently launched a program called "English: a Cool!" intended to revive the popularity of English among the country's youth.

In a globalized economy, "English is a ticket to the future," the chamber said, adding that only three out of 100 applicants meet proficiency standards of the outsourcing industry.

But program director Rina Jimenez, the decline of English among Filipinos is "definitely reversible and irreversible".

The Makati Business Club, Philippine-US Business Council and the American Chamber of Commerce are targeting their English proficiency program to students, teachers and the workforce.

The program hopes to have 50 commissioned English language centers operating in the Philippines with 200 teachers and 42,000 students trained and certified within the same three years.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the education department to make English the primary medium of instruction in all schools, although the decree does not have the force of law to compel schools to do.

Although many subjects will still be taught in the national language, Arroyo has said Filipinos must recognize that English makes it internationally competitive, Mr Arroyo said in a speech speech earlier this year.

The decline of English schools panicked Jun Mendoza Enos, an accountant who wants his Filipino to speak with American accents for jobs in call centers.

"Filipinos are quite good but they still lose lapses with their tenses, well assign, subject-verb agreements—they hurt," the Call Center Academy owner is now CEO/MP.

Steve Wallace, president of The Brilliance Business Forum which regularly surveys foreign businessmen in this country, said that only six percent of people interviewed by jobs in call centers had the required skills in English.

"So it's hard to see how the Philippines can compete with elsewhere," Wallace said.

There is plenty of blame to go around, with Gray finding different groups pointing and fingers, depending on their language ideologies of foreign crop agenda dubbed into the Filipino language.

"There has been a steady decline from the time when the Philippines took pride in itself as one of the best English-speaking countries," said Gray, an English and Literature lecturer at the University of Santo Tomas.

Noel Maurer the decline on the influence of pop culture and domestic media, where the dominant language is "taglish," a combination of Tagalog and English. AFP

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Don't impose new fees, CHEd warns private schools

By Nicain Pupa

THE COMMISSION on Higher Education (CHEd) warned private colleges and universities not to impose new fees for the coming school year as a way to offset a freeze on tuition increases.

CHEd Chair Carlito Puno told the boards that he has ordered his regional directors to submit reports on the new fees.

Puno made the warning after a consultation with college students, faculty groups who are calling for a moratorium on tuition hikes.

"We have already put a cap on tuition increases but we found from the students that there are new fees. That's not right. It's one way to circumvent the cap," Puno said.

Earlier, CHEd issued Memorandum No. 14 pegging tuition fee increases to the cost-of-living inflation rate of 7.6 percent.

Puno had already ordered private schools not to raise tuition, or if there are increases at 7.6 percent, to avoid the hardships. He said some colleges and universities are not allowed to raise tuition.

"There are few that should be taken out because they are not approved. It's the commission," Puno said. He explained that some 300 percent of college students do not pay tuition on time and not in full, "those few can still be taken out, it's not a matter of overpaid tuition."

On the issue of a moratorium on tuition increases, Puno said he would talk with representatives of private schools. "We might come to an agreement." He added there would continue to dialogue with other stakeholders on the issue.

But he reported that one private school was allowed to increase their tuition above 7.6 percent. "If there is any school that increased their tuition beyond that, report it to us. They should only an increase of three things."

During the consultation, Puno also said he would join the militant student groups in the call for a bigger budget for state colleges and universities and "make some changes to CHEd memorandum 14."

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Senate slashes ₱31B from proposed ₱1.053-T budget

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE YESTERDAY SLASHED P32 billion from the proposed P1.053-trillion 2006 national budget after a marathon debate, but still left around "lump sum appropriations."

The senators' amendments to the money measure would decrease it by ₱29.94 billion but add ₱4.41 billion, for a net decrease of ₱31.11 billion, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. said.

"What we seek to enact is a responsible and prudent budget, one that is measured with quantity as well as quality of spending. Let us strive for budget discipline because there is no such thing as a free lunch," Villar said in the opening remarks of the debate.

The sponsorship of the bill by Villar, chair of the committee on finance, paved the way for debates on the measure today.

The senators deleted the ₱5.6-billion Kilos Asenso Fund and the ₱1.66-billion Kalusugan Barangay Program Fund, both touted as "countrywide," and the ₱20-billion executive package for employees availing of the government's rationalization program.

The Kilos Asenso Fund was intended to be for national government's counterpart fund in local government projects, while the Kalusugan Fund was supposed to bankroll livelihood and infrastructure projects in conflict areas.

The senators also deleted the ₱13.1-billion compensation adjustment fund and took away ₱2,721 billion intended for airports and navigational facilities for the Department of Transportation and Communications, as well as the ₱65.514-million budget of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG).

The chamber had earlier decided to slash Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's proposal granting the PCGG a new budget after its top officials shifted from investigative to legal.

On the other hand, the senators added ₱500 million to the budget of the Department of Health, ₱100 million to the Commission on Higher Education, ₱300 million to the University of the Philippines and ₱50 million to the Agriculture and Fisheries Program for the Young Farmers Organizations, among others.

The Senate expects to wind up its debates and approve the measure by Friday. It intends to give the bicameral conference and work in keeping with its timetable of passing the appropriations and before Congress adjourns on June 3.

In his speech, Villar noted that the budget was "smarter" than the budgets of previous years.

"If in the past decade the national budget grew at an annual average of 9.4% percent, the 2006 budget, in contrast, will grow by as much as 16.7 percent amounting to ₱1113 billion," he said.

"It has the highest amount increase in six years, from fiscal year 2000 when the budget increased by 17.84 percent."

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Evicted retired officers own homes, leave

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

SOME OF THE 76 RETIRED SENIOR officers forcibly evicted from a naval housing area in Fort Bonifacio moved to other houses within the same military camp, but most were pushed by the military to their own homes in Metro Manila and the provinces, a Navy spokesperson said Wednesday.

Navy Capt. Constantino Bildebrando described that some of the retirees established the government-owned houses before giving them up during the extensive operations carried out by 1,000 soldiers Saturday and Sunday. Many of the retirees left unpaid water and electricity bills amounting to ₱7 million.

"Not one said that he's going on pay," Bildebrando said. "We're referring it to our legal office for possible filing of appropriate cases."

While he claimed the retirees had up to ₱7 million in unpaid bills, the list he gave reporters contained only 16 names—supposedly the ones with the biggest debts—with unpaid bills totaling a little over ₱1 million.

Six of the 16 Navy and Marine officers evicted from the Bonifacio Naval Station had residuals of belongings brought to the AFP Officers Village Association Inc. (AFPOVAI) and the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (Jusmag) compounds inside Fort Bonifacio.

"We don't know if they rent the houses there, but they had their belongings brought there," Bildebrando said.

Retired Commodore Alberto Orevillo, Navy Captains Jacinto Aquino and Isidoro Soriano and Major Col. Emmanuel Glory moved to AFPOVAI condo units, Commodore Dante Pajarillo and Navy Capt. Abraham Ilo sent their belongings to Jusmag quarters, Bildebrando said.

Most of the 16 retired officers moved to homes within Metro Manila, while a few moved to Laguna and Cavite.

The barbaric destruction was Sen. Carlos Pimentel's, with no less than nine M35 military trucks used to transport retired Commodore Aniño Cuallaret belongings, Bildebrando said. One retiree used up to 14 trucks to transport his belongings to Muntinlupa.

Garcia acquitted of perjury charge

By Helvan F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN'S THIRD DIVISION yesterday acquitted retired Armed Forces comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos P. Garcia from a perjury charge dating to 1999.

The court found that the alleged misrepresentations made by Garcia in his statement of assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for the year 1999 where he only declared ownership of assets valued at ₱678,000.

In a 24-page decision, penned by Associate Justice Oscar Herrera Jr. and concurred by Associate Justices Godardo Jacinto and Rhodora Cruz, the antigraft court ruled that the prosecution failed to prove Garcia's guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

In its decision, the Third Division said while the prosecution was able to prove that the rest of the assets omitted in or erased by Garcia in his 1999 SALN were false, such falsehood was not willful and deliberate.

The omitted assets include a Toyota Previa worth ₱521,797, registered under Garcia's name, and two other vehicles, registered under Garcia's wife, namely, a Mitsubishi L-300 Fun Do Liner worth ₱628,565 and a Honda Civic worth ₱964,000.

"Thus, Garcia's knowledge of the falsity entry on the subject SALN was not present. Moreover, the prosecution failed to present any evidence to prove that the accused willfully and deliberately omitted the falsehood," the court said.

The perjury case was only one of the five criminal charges and two civil cases filed against Garcia.

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ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Est. 23 No. 180

OPINION

Your opinion matters

Dilemma

THE ISSUE OVER WHETHER THE MINING OPERATIONS of the Australian firm Lafayette on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay should be allowed to continue boils down to this: the island residents' health and livelihood and the integrity of the environment versus the expected tens of millions of dollars that the mine would earn, the jobs that it would open and the message that a ban on mining on the island would send to foreign investors.

EDITORIAL

Mining on Rapu-Rapu dates back to World War II, when the Japanese Imperial Army raised its one of the island barangays. Before Lafayette, four other companies operated on the island and left three of their rivers contaminated and an extensive tract of land barren and useless, according to the Institute on Church and Social Issues.

Back in September 2000, a multi-sectoral group, Sagip-Isla, Sagip-Kapwa Inc., opposed mining on Rapu-Rapu, saying that full-scale, open-pit mining would destroy the ecological integrity of the island. It said mining never brought about the development of the town or alleviated the poverty of its people. Dr. Emeliea Regis, an environmental scientist of the Ateneo de Naga University's Institute for Environmental Conservation and Research, said that mining results in acid mine drainage which pollutes water with high levels of iron, aluminum and sulfuric acid. This puts the health of the people at high risk.

Leodegario Rasco, 82, acting president and a resident of Rapu-Rapu for almost 30 years, saw the effects of mining on the island. He said mining did not produce any long-term economic benefits for these communities. At first, there was a temporary "boom economy" but after the mining stopped, the town had to live with the irreparable damage to the land and rivers which are the sources of their livelihood from farming and fishing.

Rapu-Rapu is experiencing again the bad effects of mining. In January this year, the Pollution Adjudication Board ruled that Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc. owned by Lafayette violated the Clean Water Act when it discharged waste water with a high cyanide content into creeks in October 2005. It fined the company a total of P10.7 million.

Mayor Benito Donsis of Prieto Diaz said that the P10.7 million fine was not enough to ensure that Lafayette would install safeguards to prevent another mine spill that caused fish kills in the island. Clemente Bautista of Kilusang-PNR also said the P10.7-million fine was not sufficient to cover the environmental and social damage that the series of tailings spills brought about. He also indicated that the fine was not commensurate to the expected income of Lafayette—about $43 million (roughly P2.1 billion) a year—from its polymetallic mining project.

A Malacañang-formed commission headed by Secretary Bishop Arturo Bastes basically came up with similar findings when it recommended the stoppage of the operations of Lafayette on Rapu-Rapu, the cancellation of the environmental compliance certificate issued to two Lafayette companies and a moratorium on mining on the island. The recommendations also called for a review of the liberalized mining law.

Malacañang, however, has stood firm on its policy to allow big foreign companies to operate mines. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said a ban is not the answer. "But the standards and safeguards already in place and existing laws must be enforced," Lafayette president Carlos Dominguez said the company had spent more than P400 million on remedial measures in the area to prevent any environmental disasters in the area. He also asked what would happen to the 1,000 employees of the company and to the economic benefits for the community if a ban were imposed.

The Lafayette mine is the first in the Philippines to be developed by a foreign company in almost four decades and has yielded 2,580 ounces of gold. Benjamin Philip Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines, said the government decision allowing foreign investment in the mining industry would ensure the flow of $103 billion into the economy. Foreign investors are now watching how the government would act on the current controversy.

The government is facing a dilemma on the Lafayette issue. But it could still enforce a temporary moratorium while a second, or even a third opinion is sought from an international agency (or agencies) on the ecological integrity of the mining operations. At the same time, a study might be conducted to find out if the Lafayette operation would benefit only the foreign company and not produce any long-term economic benefits for the community.

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Fish anyone?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WITH A ORDAINE CURE OF THE LIE THEY call it "fresh fish." Locals call it"dilis"——a trend linked from the trenches of the 1930s. That's for the uneducated, poor quality fish that housewives, hauled to this budgets, buy at a fair choice.

Yet, these "dilis catch" are mining a storm of fevering luxuries livestock and fish farms as well as half-empty plates on dinner tables, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization says.

Fresh fish—juveniles, small and often damaged by rough handling—do not command premium prices. But they are processed as food or sold for poultry or cattle feeds and fish ponds.

"A dangerous spiral has evolved where the demand for low value trash fish has supposed increased fishing pressure on already degraded ecosystem," the FAO's "Status Subsidies Today" study warns. "Coastal resources are being fished down the food chain." And the percentage of trash fish has more considerably in recent years."

In human diet today, "fish is the last wild meat," Worldwatch Institute notes. The Philippines ranks 6 among the Top 10 fish producing Fisheries producers in Asia and the Pacific.

Today, however, roughly two-thirds of the world's major stocks are fished at, or beyond, their capacity. Another 16 percent have been harvested so heavily that populations will take years to recover.

Throughout the Philippines, over-fishing and habitat destruction have dived into fish catch. Lamon Bay, 180 km south of Manila, is one of the country's Top 10 fishing grounds. "But in fish catch has been declining by 13.5 percent annually—more than 600 tons recorded over age of 3.4 percent," a Los Baños study shows. Over a 30-year period, fish catches in Lingling Bulod, Talanga Island and San Miguel Bay declined by 40 percent.

Demand for fish have spiraled as populations grow. Virtually all growth in the global catch today comes from farmed fish. Aquaculture has also taken up the slack in the Philippines.

Once limited mainly to bangus, these farms today produce carp, mussels, shrimps, mud crabs, etc. They account for 34 centavos out of every peso earned from fish products.

If the trend over the last 10 years holds, this industry will grow at 6 percent yearly. We marked catch for markets from black waters ponds. For inland aquaculture, the Philippines was 11th.

Among other countries, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India have been spurring aquaculture to provide protein jobs as well as export earnings. Shrimps and fish, for Japanese tempura shops and sushi bars, do bring in rents.

Mud-eating fish at least once a week showed the rate of immediate-ingestion decline in elderly people by 10-15 percent per year," reports Dr. Jean-Paul Marthon-Sánchez, M.D., of Mexico's University Medical Center. The Archives of Internology says, "That rate of reduction is equivalent to having those robust years younger in age."

Fish is the main source of protein for fisherfolk, especially the poorest of the poor. These families cluster on small, infertile land parcels or squat on marginal coastal lands, vulnerable to typhoons, accidents.

It is along the waters where people feed most directly the spinoffs between numbers and depletion. Philippines' population more than billion people live along a coastline or within 200 kilometers of one. And coastal population may double by 2025. The same pattern prevails here.

This concentration of people, however, are threatening what coastal ecosystems like coral reefs. The Philippines, Kenya, Liberia and Puerto Rico have lost over 75 percent of their mangroves. Most fish produce in young inshore. They feed on organisms in coastal waters.

"San Fabian fish port because they are fishers," asks the FAO study. "Or are they fishers because they are poor?"

Because of its "open access nature, and lack of allowable resources, fisheries is often the employment of the last resort." All arguments end with the same conclusion "result in the fisheries equals poverty."

There is an ethical argument for giving priority for the poor to fish, FAO notes. Chronic hunger is rife in fishing villages. It's no small irony that those who bring fish to our dinner tables often can't afford it.

Subsistence fishers, however, could be crippled if the supply for inland were shrinked. About a quarter of total fish caught today ends up as fish meal in poultry farms or shrimp ponds. They call this "the fish meal trap."

There has been a prominent debate on the effectiveness of this fish meal trap," the FAO notes. Today's surge of aquaculture could falter if ponds do not get the meal and oil needed. "The cultivation of many species rely on fishmeal and oil for growth ... The natural limits of fish meal and oil could, in the future, restrict the development of global aquaculture."

The Philippines will need about 220,000 tons of fish meal for its ponds. But it produces only 70,000 tons. A significant proportion must be imported.

Like the Philippines, Thailand has large fish meal factories. In Bangladesh, this has restricted a household-level enterprise: India is shifting to exports of high quality fish and fish soy products. A surge in demand from poultry and fish farms have sent China scampering to support the enterprise.

The "fish meal trap" has raised unanswered questions for the future. "Who are the beneficiaries and losers of the current system?" the FAO asks. "And how would that change through management interventions?"

Chew on that with your next order of fish fillet.

• • •

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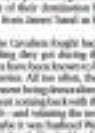
Motivations

THERE'S THE RUB



Comrades de Quiros

AS I WRITE THIS, THE DETROIT PISTONS have just dunked out a game they needed to win against the Cleveland Cavaliers. As have the San Antonio Spurs against the Dallas Mavericks, bringing all the NBA semifinalists, except for Miami and New Jersey, in light a date to pioneers, war-of-attrition, Game 7. But by readers who aren't into basketball, don't worry, this column isn't about those games, though because I know they've been a pain for to watch, making losing sleep unnecessarily much it.

This is about something those games have in common: dramatic ally over the past weeks.

That is the motivational power of insult or humiliation.

That's something the Cavaliers, in particular, have shown. Nobody gave them a ghost of a chance to win against The Pistons. Though they have the phenomenal LeBron James, a 21-year old whose athletic skills probably surpass even Jordan's and whose basketball maturity is well beyond his years, they also have a pretty mediocre supporting cast which produced a pretty mediocre showing during the regular season. By contrast, the Pistons have never been better, winning 64-18 during that season and adding a dimension to their game (the team's three) before. Under new coach Flip Saunders, late of the lamentable Minnesota Timberwolves, the Pistons have become a more scoring machine while maintaining a juggernaut of defense.

It was lopsided in the extreme, and the experts gave them pretty much the same odds in the wild-eastern ad. Here between David and Goliath. Indeed—and here comes the part about the motivational power of insult—the pre-series hero and ridiculed Cleveland's playby or ambition. The real match, Charles Barkley said, was between San Antonio and Dallas—that was "going to be a monster series." But the one between Cleveland and Detroit, we could forget it, he scoffed. "The Pistons will stand down [the Cavaliers]."

He was right about San Antonio and Dallas, he was wrong about Cleveland and Detroit. Dead wrong. I hear confess thought that predication and the start of that series did little to diminish me of it. The Pistons did stand the Cavaliers in the first two games, splitting their wins in the dirt. Typhoon Pistons, in particular, gave the world to see the extent of their domination by awaiting the ball away from James' hand as he was about to dunk it.

But lo and behold, the Cavaliers fought back. Maybe it was the taunting, they are beating the first two games. Coaches have been known to be leery of blowouts in a series. All too often, they do not result in the opponent being demoralized, they result in the opponent coming back with the fervor of the humiliated—and winning the next game, or games. Or maybe it was Rasheed Wallace's antics, Rasheed, like Bobby being a veritable suffogging of possible quotes. After the Cavs won Game 3, Rasheed said it was a fluke and predicted Game 4 would be the last time they celebrated in their home court.

Maybe it was all that, the Cavs getting fed up with the taunts of the New games, they metaphorically into, well, the Pistons themselves, playing the kind of tagged defense the Pistons had shown all season, and reducing their foes to arguing with the referees rather than playing their normal game. The Cavs won and the prospect that Rasheed again burst out when asked if the match might produce a different outcome than he thought: "No way in hell they're going to beat us in a series!"

And still the next game the Cavaliers found a way in hell to lose, or at least threaten to do so. They found the heart of the Pistons in their second and brought Cleveland so close to basketball heaven at its ever been all its life. I was, of course, one of those who rooted for them last Saturday morning (Manila time), hoping to see a Cinderella story reach its happily-ever-after ending.

Alas, things that are too good to be true, as they say, often are, and this one was no exception. The Cavaliers got blindpersist all the boards in the last minute of a very tight game, and lost. And not without culpable irony. Rasheed Wallace did them in. What outcome see? The guy talks the talk but walks the walk. And well, the basketball gods are veritably crazy.

But who knows? Maybe the Cavs can still pull off the Cinderella ending. Of course, they'll be playing Game 7 in Detroit, of course, Detroit isn't going to win it. And don't forget defense the worst five cents? And didn't David defeat the Goliath? Is a dingbat? "Believe," say the head lines of Cleveland newspapers. It's enough to make you want to.

Never underestimate the power of pride, but even more, never underestimate the power of insult. What, it probably just two ways of saying the same thing? Not quite. Pride is more internal and less brash. The people who have massive accumulation heights after being insulted or humiliated are not many to overlook. Albert Einstein himself never got particularly high grades in math, and many great artists and people in sports were once told by their high school and high school mentors they might want to consider other occupations. They went on to prove them wrong.

Jose Rizal himself caught a glimpse of that when he attributed the father's discovery of self-worth to the sympathetic's insults. After being abused by the Spanish friar, he had the added abuse of being called names. His inner pride was pricked, and he rebelled.

That persistent, of course, that you've got pride, to begin with, to rise to great heights after being brought down to size. Kobe, the kind of wounded warrior, once wrote to Shaq of the Hispanic, the local mannerisms of the late indie, feeling lied to apart from being flogged daily to day. And just grinning and bearing it.

But that's quite another story, or sport.

Reuter: RP richer in spirit than the West

FR. JAMES B. REUTER, S.J., CELEBRATES HIS 50th birthday late May 23 with an impressive array of activities that indicates a dependence by Provincial Municipal Mayor Jaime Z. Bautista. Ritter celebrated principally by Cardinals Cardinal Rosales at the St. Paul's Quezon City Chapel, the Magnificat showed from the archdiocese of music to end the festivals of a book of his writings, plays and sponsored by Cagayan. These events were a crowded especially for his younger brother and sister, Reinhold and Sidney, who traveled from New York with their spouses, his nephews James and Victor Reuter to be with him.

Cardinal Rosales wondered with a laugh how he could communicate in a brief homily the lifetime of such a multi-talented and energetic personality but he nonetheless tried by tracing Reuter's project in RP as writer and communicator, priest and missionary. He said the chancellor, the movie critic, the theater director-stage-actor never caught the true prodigious teacher whose energies have spilled out into radio. Even before the Mr. & Mr. Magazine of Ziggy Spaniel came out against Marcos' martial law, the cardinal testified, Reuter was already commissioning the life of martial law. But before all, Reuter was a priest who celebrated the mysteries here. All the fortunes and consequences he taught his young students in the classroom or in the quiet field, he also initiated into his ministry as he taught and taught for the record.

Reuter's response began with the characteristic humor he asserted that all the powers of praise being showered on him would nevertheless the Father in Heaven that he was already having his reward on earth. He lamented that during all these decades he RP was denied by its spiritual by the "orthodoxy" of the Filipino soul, which has made our country richer than those of the West. That country, he said, may be poor in the material things, but it's very rich in spirit. Reuter said that he was deeply saddened that this spirit is being opportunized by Jose Rizal (for using his harmful to Josephine Bracken, whom he married just before his martyrdom, when he said that we Filipinos have only the land,

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

the sea, ore and rice and not much else, but in our intelligence, president's, we have also the second that we have multitudes.

* * *

The Intramuros Mass was attended by many personalities who had come under Reuter's influence over the decades. Among those I spotted were noted Filipino-Chinese actress Cristina Gonzalez, who had become Mrs. Jose Peace Ritter, and longtime Intramuros columnist Larry Fonacier. Larry had met his future wife when serving Reuter's All-Nighters-in-Jesus of 1991, the first time that Reuter sought as the farmers after his arrival in Manila in 1956. Overlooking this, Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon quipped that Larry is the typical example of the old adage, "Behind-the-mass cause-man."

* * *

Easily one of the most exciting personalities in the ongoing 21st Intramuros International Theatre Institute-sponsored World Congress being hosted by the Philippines is a phenomenon Londoner-cum-second Bangladeshi former fashion model and designer, who has won the coveted title of Unicef's "Artist for Peace" and its "Peace Prize," which has put her on par with such famous personalities as Jesse Jackson, Stephen Hawking, Desmond Tutu, Jacques Cousteau, Nanda Devi Singh, Sir Barbara Bramblemd and Hans Blix. Bibi Russell used to be a much-sought-after black model for some of the biggest fashion houses in the world, such as Yves Saint Laurent, Kenzo, Karl Lagerfeld and Giorgio Armani. Now she's known for her reviews and unfailing commitment to human dignity, development and the eradication of poverty in her native Bangladesh.

* * *

Her visit has been a true company she put up in the setup and strengthen the rich weaving heritage of her weaving cultural Productions. She it's over than just those wearing rich textiles and creating luxurious embroidery for this model entrepreneur. Bibi's cohort 10,000 weavers, crafts people and others that she has helped up with it on depleting to support of many families, in which Bangladesh has been acclaimed Artisan Trade all of her luminaries, including famous and shoes, and lately women weavers and make people using bare because self-sufficiency taught her work. She has also succeeded in showing the interests of the international fashion industry to the styles of garments in her country, by helping them find new outlets through her fashion shows in Bangladesh, North America, India and Africa. Today the world is very much her stage, as she promotes not just Bangladeshi women, but those from all over the world. Her visit to the Philippine capital event this was explained by another title given to in December 2005: "Unesco Artist for Peace."

Russell's story reminds me very much of our own fashion and fabric entrepreneurs who have also pioneered in the development of indigenous materials and designs. Our own Inday Locsin, would women Gualberto, Manila Carpenter of Baguio and Nita Bautista-Ong, they don't the necessary!

* * *

Old christmas around the country have as a matter of policy shot down movies rated X (or its or its adult) only. But even before the Motion & Television Review & Classification Board (MTRCB) came out with an R-18 ruling for the controversial "The Da Vinci Code," the family of Henry Sy reportedly had made up its mind not to show it in their theaters. The film's governors were quoted as commenting that they would collect a huge drop in income as a result of the 50 movie chain's boycott. But Sy reportedly reasoned that the blasphemy to Mendoza-ing has a chapel on the 7th floor where the celebrated Binondo Encantanto is adored by hundreds of people every day, so how can they show the movie that desecrates Jesus Christ?

By Undas a lot of cinemas

Breaking the wall

I WAS SEATED CLOSE TO ANY OF MY SIBLINGS' FRIENDS. It's as if I have this wall between them and me. The wall goes even higher with their boyfriend or girlfriend (whenever they would have one), but that's another story.

I may be five to seven years their senior, but I know that is not reason enough to be grumpy on. On birds, yes, maybe it's the age gap that's making me intolerant of the noise their friends make whenever they come to the house to watch movies or listen to music or simply share stories. But I do make some effort to be polite to them; whenever they call for hang out, it's typically me who says "Hello, Ate!" or "Hi, Ate!" or "Ate, ate ko lang."

YOUNG BLOOD

Yumi E. Bautista

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

Come to think of it, my sister's and my brother's friends are nice kids. I think the problem is me. However, had I known that one of them would be leaving so soon, I would have gone the extra mile to say polite to her.

I must have seen Laura only a couple of times, although she and my sister were schoolmates since their kinder garten days. I hardly remember speaking with her. But I can tell exactly how pretty she was: from the photos my sister is posting, tall, full-figured, hair-skinned—very innocent, actually.

Laura left when they were in their third year of high school. She decided to leave everything behind, including her good education and her rather comfortable life. She gave in to what she referred to then as her "calling."

When I heard about it, I completely understood what she wanted to do. Having gone to a private university for college, I am not new to gut-instinct being expressed in that manner.

As Laura grew more deeply involved in the movement, my sister, their friends and schoolmates were on to Facebook high school.

I can recall being in my sister's recognition and graduation rites. Despite Laura's absence, her name was mentioned several times in some of the speeches, as her fourth-year batchmates bid for having made such a lasting decision.

I remember wondering aloud in some of their banter sessions what she was doing.

"She's in the middle of an insurgency," someone supposed. "She could be giving lectures to new recruits."

Another one said, "She could have gotten married to settle the movement."

From those different answers, I could tell that they had her pinned very hard to her chosen path, now changed her name. I thought, and given the situation, that was only to be expected. She could be moving around some remote places where her batch mates were busy choosing courses and taking exams for admission to different universities.

A few days after my sister graduated from college, she got a new browser from a fellow alumnus of their high school. The message was brief: Laura had been killed.

I asked some questions, and piecing together what my sister told me and what I could gather from her friends, I learned that Laura and three others had been shot several times by men believed to be from the military. Witnesses said they were engaged in a very busy joker in Bicol, and it involved daylight too!

I forbade my sister from going to the wake in Bicol, and we ended up arguing. I cannot bear to stay away from what I then called a "mess." Then I learned that Laura's father also died in an ambush some years earlier and added the same information to my list of what I dropped off the radar. It's in my mind and shocked my worries and my sorrow dies. I said to myself: Why wouldn't you just be a normal, understanding person like me? I broke down the wall, and for my sister's sake I saw Laura for the last time.

As I write this, I still cannot get Laura off my mind. Intelligence agencies say that the young woman was killed by armed men believed to belong to the forces of the government that she was fighting. The most common question to her death was: Is it "That is no way to die for a 21-year-old girl?" But think about it, is there really a "better" way to die for someone who's so young?

Death is cruelty and it is unfair, painfully for people close to it to consider died. Laura's was a death that served a purpose, a death that earned the respect of many who had been, in one way or another, a part of her life. He's in a light that has grown old through time. Her family, friends and colleagues must be proud of her.

My only message to her is one in our language. "*Spagpahinga Ogma sa Inog mana nanto.*" Let's just have everything to God.

Yumi E. Bautista, 25, writes for a television network and wants to publish TV show writing and her blog for print because her brother has yet to finish college. Laura isn't alone in some other sister's friend.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, courses and years you were/are in, if employed, the positions you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Mob mentality

"I almost volunteered them. But I didn't. It only is not safe for them."

—Interior Secretary Raul Gonzalez on his decision to downgrade the charges against three of the four Filipinos accused of raping a 21-year-old Filipina in Rome

Criminal-friendly

"I now realize why our country's justice system is called the criminal justice system. That's because its laws are very friendly for the criminals... We're a criminal-friendly country!"

—Rufus Oteng, whose two daughters were raped and murdered in the outskirts of Al Ain

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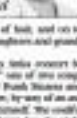
The 'matrona's' delight



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

had a shockingly full head of hair, and on to family pictures of his five daughters and grandchildren.

And of course, wasn't any Imba concert be complete without "Mr. Why," one of two songs that he said he'd written for Ruth Riviera and which he performed as a duet, by-way of an audio feed, with Dr. Blue Boy himself. The soulful number brought the house down, but the highest-watt spot, Cuneta-style, was reserved for none other than Imba herself, who, clapping and dancing, and dancing in the good feeling.

Afterwards, friends Irma Aviles and Lucie got the feeling that Imba would perform, too. And for those who missed the chance to see Imba live, there's always a brand CD out that recreates his hits from the 1950s to the 1980s, as well as his love songs.

* * *

PEI were at the SM Mall of Asia last Sunday for the "Ultra 15" preview (more on the movie in a later column), giving us a chance to walk through the complex which is supposedly the third-largest shopping mall in Asia, if not the world.

Whether over guiding blocks away along the area roads surrounding the mall, but we persisted in driving all the way to the parking lots most frequents. When we opened at midnight, we congratulated ourselves, only to realize later that the movie houses in the "entertainment center" are way on the other side of the complex, necessitating a brisk 15-20 minute walk through many sidewalks overlooking construction going on.

It seemed all of Metro Manila had the same idea

and was paying a visit on the third of June. A good number of them were even parking cars that had Pampanga plates, a result of Mall Nation. We also entered the 13th hall, where families were slumped on the carpeted floor to ogling the different exhibits, but we never told the "regular" movie house reserves for hundreds the second floor.

After a few wrong turns, we finally found the cinema by an upstairs area where a line surfaced performances was going on, adding to the general confusion. We wondered how the mall builders were planning to cope with the crush, since much of the complex is open to the outdoors, with the remainder of the building is open to the elements. Rapido recalled on an "anti-amusement" law that Rapido must be in the only mall to be found where shoppers have to dig umbrellas indoors, with the inevitable winds driving in precipitation throughout the wide open doors.

* * *

WELL, the Mall of Asia cannot be an amazing piece of architecture and business daring. We happened to pass by the Olympic site for shooting this and were very properly impressed, especially with the new Philippine Arena, which will be the World Bowl, with its dome rather than the Astrodome. We couldn't help but wonder how the Philippine Arena will be used when shopping malls are sprouting like mushrooms indoors, with the inevitable winds driving in precipitation throughout the wide open doors.

The discreet terror of Fidel Castro

THIS SPRING MARKS THE THIRD ANNIVERsary of the onset of repression in which Fidel Castro's regime arrested and hustled down long sentences to 75 leading Cuban dissidents. Some of them, friends and I formed the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba.

The discovery of those who found their social network, occasion that said according to communicate democracy remains fresh in my memory. It reminds me of the night of both that rang out on Prague's Wenceslas Square—and have entered the list of what was then Czechoslovakia—to the accompaniment of 1989.

That is why I sang boys during the conference calling for democracy in Cuba that our statesmen held in Prague three years ago. I wanted to draw the international community's attention to the human rights violations in Cuba, to support those within Castro's opposition, and to encourage all pro-democracy forces. The European Union had not developed diplomatic positions, which usually symbolic, against Castro's regime.

Regrettably, however, country's position quite to the fore. The EU opened a dialogue with the Cuban regime, sanctions were conditionally suspended, and it was even made clear to dissidents that they should not expect much support from the European countries. Certainly compromise and political allies...as we often in history...delivered a principled position. In events, the Cuban regime stepped up its drastic measures against a small number of the prisoners of conscience—mostly those who were literary and scientific ill—who the regime had rounded up in its notorious prisons.

Those of us who had the foresight to join our committee decided to capitalize on some political links when we lived behind the former Iron Curtain. We are also extremely familiar with the arguments that Eastern political left use led to say

WORLD VIEW

Vaclav Havel, Madeleine Albright, André Glucksmann, Arpad Göncz, Yevanna Landsbergis and Adam Michnik

same session in Cuba. But democracy has always weakness and the Cuban regime knows to encourage it in others.

Respected organizations like Reporters without Borders and Amnesty International have collected ample evidence of violence and intimidation against these brave dissidents, whose only crime is their kind of dog that has their barking ears. Their sanctions do not end in cruelty but in hospitals, hostage of "fighters for the revolution"—as in days of the Cuban revolution. Their friends show political opinions and narrow thirds of distant writers in an effort to intimidate them or to force them to emigrate. On the island, such planned harassments are called "actos de repudio"—"acts of repudiation."

Political realities that creates the impression of mere cruel crimes to more easy to prove, unless all terms of social peace, and therefore it does not interest the international media. Only the courage and determination from the world's unswerving demands of former political prisoners in countries and countries that our existence to the fact that a task from a severe problem is on the more from just as a task from a problem behind prison gates.

The prisoners of conscience in Cuba are not organized severe fights and the same agonies his family is experienced in the same way as the penitentiaries of somebody featured during a state security investigation. Many European politicians who have sought to see the situation on the ground have been feared in recent years.

Some Europeans, apparently regard Cuba as a faraway country whose fate does not make us in sense is, because they have problems of their own. But what Cubans are enduring today is part of our own European history. We better than Europeans, who have not experienced it, to the world and then paid dearly for it over many decades, know better about the consensus to liberal spirit that Cuba's people?

Humanity will pay the price for consensus on an such a crime as we have to stand up to it with all political responsibility and decisiveness. We have many open matters to do as in Europe and Cuba. And it is our responsibility as the new member countries of the EU have the thought to Europe liberalization and experience, and with it he has understanding for and tolerance of one silence and compromise.

Representatives of the EU's member states will have to decide whether they want to review a common policy toward Cuba. European diplomats should weigh up the consequences of accommodating Castro's regime. They should show that they will neither ignore his practices nor neglect the suffering of Cuban people. Europe's leaders must never forget the seemingly anonymous victims of Castro's "acts of repudiation."

Project Syndicate

Vaclav Havel is a former president of the Czech Republic and chairman of the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba. Madeleine Albright is a former United States secretary of state. André Glucksmann is a philosopher. Arpad Göncz is a former president of Hungary. Yevanna Landsbergis is a former president of Lithuania. And Adam Michnik, a former Polish dissident, is editor in chief of Gazeta Wyborcza.

The 'shift' we really need

TODAY, MOST FILIPINOS ARE PASTING so much time and energy on trivial matters. They may be ruled concerns, but these are other more important things ...and upon reflection, I think what we really need is a paradigm shift. Let's be pro-active.

Since I was a child, I've been fond to look at the brighter side of our country, despite all the problems we have. In school, the first two lines of our national anthem always made me proud and secure in the thought that we are a rich country. "The Pearl of the Orient," said I believe in this to this day.

I also believe that we have so much to look forward to in the near future, if we would be humble enough to live within our means, to look into what we have in abundance, and sincerely and selflessly work together for the benefit of the country as of most people, especially the poor. This may sound so simple but we are capable of doing this. All that is needed is humility and genuine love for people.

We are a creative, innovative and tough nation. We have shown to ourselves and other countries that we can excel the best. We are a blessed race. We have fertile, arable lands. There is no winter to worry about. We have more than an ample supply of water. Let us count our blessings. Why look on their lands and be bitter that we are being left economically far behind by our neighboring countries? They like us, have their blessings—and challenges and problems, too. But I'd rather look to them both out, though we can learn from their mistakes.

If we really reflect deeper, we really have a paradise for a country. That is our land and let us preserve this and every natural thing it nurtures. We should love this land such that God showed us always.

Let's bring out the best in us and freely share our talents. It's 2006! The latest of science and technology is within our reach. Are we willing to think and grow "solar" and to use buses as alternative transportation in the rural areas? Are we humble enough to ride bikes to go to work? Are we ready for organic farming? Are we ready to let go of our "addictions to things western" and start patronizing our own products? If not, we will remain confused, to keep on trying.

Also important is the media. Especially the TV networks; they can play a big, big role in enhancing many Filipinos. How I wish that they air more wholesome shows. For example, how I wish ABS-CBN's next batch of "Pinoy Big Brother" contestants will also consist of nationalistic and patriotic Filipinos or role-model-ables, not just others for stars or would-be stars. And GMA can have much insightful and informative whole nation would get from the program after 90 days of live coverage. This is just an example.

There are so many more ways we can imagine to improve things in our country. There is always a bright side to a problem, so look at it.

Let's make this "real shift."

—PATRICIA S. LACSON,
Talisay City,
Negros Occidental.
draftbear@yahoo.com

Should SC allow a constituent assembly

THE REPORT TO INQUIRER.NET IN editorial titled "Madame Miriam," (Thirst for the first time the editorial writer has shown bias against the senator.) Senator Santiago is willing and character witness. Instead, the editorial fell short of providing an intelligent discussion of the issues; it belittled the senator's public statements, calling them "pretentious" and "tortuous-talking," whose basis is "too thin, without substance."

As a constitutional law expert who has taught the subject in the UP College of Law for some 18 years, Santiago insisted to educate the public on the possible scenario should the Supreme Court rule that the people's initiative for amendments by three-fourths votes of Congress voting as a whole, instead of separately. With a ruling like that, she said, Congress would likely convene itself to be a constituent assembly come July 24, 2006.

The editorial also took exception to the senator's statement that should the Supreme Court uphold the creation of the constituent assembly, she would participate in it because she did not want to be branded a coward. Let us help write the new Constitution. The editorial said: "This seems as a surprise, because until last week we did not realize she thought she was elected in 2004 to write a new Constitution in 2006."

The revelation is a commitment answers. My is provided for in the present Constitution. Under Article 17, Sec. 1 of the Charter, "Any amendment to, or revision of, this Constitution may be proposed by: (1) The Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its Members; x x x." The participation by such members in Congress in a constituent assembly is a duty mandated by the present Charter. The rule is that where a public body or officer has been clothed by statute with power to do an act which concerns the public interest or the rights of third persons, the exercise of the power may be construed as a duty through the phraseology of the statute be merely permissive and not peremptory. (Swarbaugh Trump, Co. v. Miller, 2 Colo. 37, 57; 101, 113, 9 Am. Jur. 2d 27-4) Certainly, one should not begrudge a lawmaker for being willing to fulfill a duty mandated by law.

Lastly, the editorial made short shrift of Santiago's statement that the abolition of the Senate to give way to a unicameral parliament will save the government over P1 billion per year, or more than P5 billion until 2010. But the elaboration of Inquirer's readers, this estimate of the senator is an educated guess based on the more than P1,212 million allocated for the Senate by House version of the proposed 2006 budget.

—CARLOS LLAMAZARES SETTELA,
chief of staff,
Office of Sen. Miriam
Defensor Santiago, Rm. 518,
Senate of the Philippines,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

LETTERS

No 'mansions' in MWSS housing

WE HAVE A VERY HIGH REGARD FOR the Inquirer, which is known for fair and balanced reporting, and for Neal Cruz, a respected journalist whose columns are read regularly. That is why we were surprised to read his May 15 column which alleged that: (1) there are mansions being constructed at the MWSS Housing Project site; and (2) the MWSS Housing Project is for MWSS executives.

Cruz must have heard wrong information.

No mansion is being constructed at the MWSS Housing Project. The project is not just for executives. It is for all MWSS officials and employees.

Of the 94 housing units already completed or under construction, 31 (33 percent) have a floor area of 36 or 44 square meters each. They cost only P343,000, P393,000 per unit.

Forty-two units (34 percent) are modified versions of the 44-sq m model—with extension or mezzanine.

Only 21 units (22 percent) have second floors. Of these, only 10 of these can be considered big. But constantly, they cannot be described as "mansions."

My house, for instance, is just a one bedroom unit with a floor area of only 68 sq m. The houses of the senior deputy administrator and the deputy administrator for operations are just two bedroom bungalows. The houses that can be considered in relatively big units belonged to the executives, but senior rank and file employees who either donated their lots to the company, or sold some property or awarded a loan to finance the construction of their houses.

The housing project was conceived way back in the early '90s but was stalled only in 2003.

The housing site, now owned by the MWSS Employees' Office Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MOMCO), was part of a 5000 property of the MWSS. It is located on a part of the La Mesa Watershed. It was granted a Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) in November 1999, after complying with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Statement System.

The topographic contour of the area is such that the housing site is located below the La Mesa Dam elevation and the filtration facilities. All the discharges from the housing units will, therefore, not affect the reservoir. The same is true with the existing subdivisions in the area which are even nearer the filtration area than the project is.

The MCMC has assured that all the mitigation measures to protect the environment and to ensure drainage facilities have been incorporated in the housing project design.

We would like to emphasize that the provisions of the units is being financed by the members through the contributions of loans proceeds from accumulated CoSa, lot sale of other property, GSIS assistance, and life long family savings.

—DELACRUZ, ROMUALDO,
administrator, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City

MILITANTS rally against Charter change in Davao City.

Student leader voiced public anger vs GMA

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON "THE letter "Noynoy's failure" (PDI, 5/20/06) and Winnie Monsod's article "No role model." (PDI, 4/29/06)

The letter writer and Monsod should do well to remember that honesty, integrity and righteousness are positive Filipino values.

When Ms. Theresa Bonifilian bedded Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, she was merely expressing the public anger that GMA didn't deserve her standing, our votes, taxes, rights and opportunities to progress. Also, let us remember that Noynoy's decision was respect for she has shamelessly violated our democracy by her tireless attempts to institutionalize tyranny and muzzle the media to our land.

While lauding democracy, the elitist policemen so violently disperse rallies that are not to her liking, and she seems not to care that the number of murdered activists and journalists is rising fast.

Moreover, she is insensitive to the plight of poor Filipinos. She raised the value-added tax by 10 percent, then turned up the prices of basic needs starting that with workers ask for a wage hike, she plays deaf. Yet, she's all out for Charter change which is, clearly, primarily meant to lengthen in power.

Worse, she has been boasting that God wants her to stay in power as if the God of Truth and Justice wants the people to suffer more.

After all the things she had done to the Filipino nation, do Monsod and the writer of "Noynoy's failure" expect sensible young people to support GMA? Asking us to respect her is like asking us to allow dishonesty, greed for power, and immorality. GMA showcases the worst in our system. As such, she's the real "Noynoy's failure." She's "no role model" for the youth or for anyone.

Instead of respecting her, we should all be bedding her in every way possible, as we have bedded Marcos and Estrada out of power. State and the Inquirer people bedded and Thaksin and Garcia, respectively, and to the end, they all achieved stability. We only have to bedde GMA out of power, and we would have better chances to achieve peace, progress and prosperity.

But for now, cheers to Ms. Theresa and the Filipino nation who loves her, not jeers to GMA's apologists!

—DAVID MICHAEL M. SAN JUAN,
statesman,
Alicia Stephens Revamont (ASR)-Tolosas, 411 Pamandian,
City of Malolos, Bulacan

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, May 23, 2006
American Idol
ABC
Iba Tayo!
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Across the NATION

Arrest of PNP regional exec ordered

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—DIRECTOR GENERAL Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief, on Monday ordered the arrest of the chief of the Traffic Management Group in Central Luzon following an investigation into the latter's alleged anomalous activities and fraudulent entry in the PNP.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Director General Lomibao police directorate Lomibao directed the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Camp Crame to arrest Supt. Napoleon Corayan.

Rafanan, interviewed by phone from Cambodia, said the arrest has to be made after Corayan on Saturday eluded the 304th provincial mobile group in Bataan.

Corayan, who assumed the post on March 6 this year, on Monday filed a petition for indirect contempt against Lomibao.

Also named respondents were Director Nicolas Bulaon, personnel and records management chief; Director Ricardo Ebarle, investigation and detective management chief; Chief Supt. Isreal Dia, TMG chief; and Senior Supt. Napoleon Ferdez, head of the special investigation committee formed by the...

In the civil case filed at the regional trial court Branch 77 in Quezon City, Corayan said the same court on March 22, 2005 ordered the PNP to "permanently desist from proceeding with the summary dismissal hearing or reinvestigation" of his case of alleged dishonesty and fraudulent entry in the PNP.

In the petition, he also said Lomibao informed then Solicitor General Alfredo Benjamin that the "PNP was convinced that one should be finally put to rest by not pursuing any appeal with the Court of Appeals or filing any motion for reconsideration with the trial court."

In the copy of the May 1, 2005 letter to Benjamin, Lomibao said that the trial court "relied on the decision" of then PNP chief Leandro Mendoza, who "exonerated" Corayan from the administrative case.

"Hence, conducting another investigation on the same allegation would indeed be inconsistent with the principle of res judicata (finality putting the case to rest)," Lomibao told Benjamin.

Interviewed at the TMG regional office here where he has holed up since Sunday, Corayan said the injustice he would "resist" across his entrapment by the Investigation Division, headed by Fle "has no basis at all."

But in his May 15, 2005 order, Ele included several other cases. These were Corayan's alleged association release of four arrested members of a Malaysia-based syndicate and a stolen vehicle.

He also mentioned Corayan's pending criminal cases of grave threats, slight physical injuries, robbery and homicide.

In the interview, Corayan said it was not his office but the TMG's Special Operations Group that arrested the four on March 6, 2006 operations in Bulacan.

"I was in Cebu that same night supervising an operation where two of my men were wounded," Corayan said.

Supt. Rolando Asuncion, TMG Bulacan chief, said the TMG-SOG did not coordinate the operations with the TMG region...

...al or provincial office.

According to Corayan, the cases that Ele had mentioned had already been dismissed.

CIDG troops were reported during a search on Corayan's house in Barangay Banaba in Mariveles, Bataan, for stolen cars. Corayan demand being interfered in on their search on some Camp Olivas sources hinted.

Corayan's camp also said the police's arrest on Saturday because he "felt that they were ready to follow."

He said he suspected that "some police officials" were after his post. He did not name them. He also suspected that one theft syndicate might be behind the campaign to oust him. Estrelle Dejus, PDI Central Luzon Desk

BMG. GEN. Benjamin Ochoa Ilos (center) visits at MNLF camp in Bitaog Panamao Mtgs rl to facilitate a meeting of the MNLF group with representatives from the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The OIC came to Baka to review the progress, or lack of it, of the 1996 peace agreement between the MNLF and the government.

BCDA vice president asks Japanese firm to recall executive

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—AN OFficial of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is pushing for the immediate recall of a Japanese contractor of the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway project.

Antonio Nin Dans, BCDA vice president for operations, said he is set to ask the Shimizuki Corp. headquarters in Japan to recall Katsuhiko Chubayashi, the project manager in charge of the Bataan segment of the expressway project.

The provincial government of Bataan had declared Chubayashi as persona non grata for his alleged refusal to comply with interventions of the provincial government leading to the collection of local taxes on the hauling of filling materials extracted from several quarry sites there.

Dans said the move to recall Chubayashi would "stave the ongoing tensions" between the Japanese contractor and provincial officials of Bataan.

He said the Japanese Embassy in Manila was "agitated and disturbed" by the misunderstanding between Bataan government officials and the Japanese executive.

The embassy requested the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) to help resolve the issue among Philippine government agencies in charge of the project, particularly with the BCDA and the Bataan provincial government.

The Neda has asked BCDA to address the embassy's concern with regard to the issue and has asked its officials led by retired Gen. Benito Abaya to immediately act on the matter.

In their letter to the Neda, embassy officials raised their concerns about the human officials' drastic move against Chubayashi, Dans said.

He quoted the embassy officials as saying that "Chubayashi did not commit a criminal act nor acted prejudicial to national cash a decision of the road project. "No one is indispensable or for us he project is concerned," Chin said.

Bataan officials were divided on the issue as the municipal mayors of Limay, Bataan and Hermosa expressed misgivings over the hostile campaign against Chubayashi.

OIC team wants Nur with them in Jeddah talks

By Joffrey M. Tupas and Dennis Jay C. Santos
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ISABELA CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE INFLUENtial Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) want to see jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari sitting with them in a tripartite meeting to include Saudi Arabia in July.

Sayed Kassem El-Masry, adviser to OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, said the presence of Misuari in the meeting is necessary to ensure the Southern Philippines Liberation Front (MNLF) leader's crucial role in the implementation of the peace agreement which he signed with former President Fidel Ramos.

"We believe that Misuari plays a crucial role in the process. So we are expecting to see him during the tripartite meeting," El-Masry said.

"We are urging the Philippine government to expedite the release of Misuari for him to participate in the process in July," El-Masry added.

El-Masry said the entire OIC delegation expressed optimism that the government will consider their appeal.

This, after the government agreed to meet for Misuari, who is reportedly suffering from hypertension and requires heavy medication, in a house close to Fr. Leo's hospital.

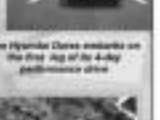
"The government graciously responded to our request for his release and transfer for humanitarian ground," El-Masry said.

The release of Misuari, according to him, is the common concern of various civil society groups, most of them Muslim, that they were able to encounter in their mission. The OIC representatives flew to Isabela City to meet with Ustazin Ishaw Malik, leader of what is now known as the MNLF Misuari Breakway Group.

Jaber Dereza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said the government is currently considering the case of Misuari.

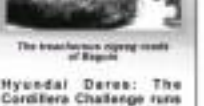
HYUNDAI DARES: THE CORDILLERA CHALLENGE

THE WINDING ROADS



The Hyundai Dares embarks on the first leg of its 4-day performance drive

On the first day of its 4-day performance drive, Hyundai dares to travel the distance between Manila and Baguio. Hyundai surges ahead through tough hill territory with the intense torque power and superb maneuverability of its CRDi line up. The Getz, Matrix, Tucson, Accent and Starex, which comprised the dare team of vehicles, easily took control of the steep-angled, winding roads leading to the country's famed summer capital, Baguio City.



The treacherous zigzag roads of Baguio

Hyundai Dares: The Cordillera Challenge runs from May 23 to 26, 2006.

Dare to drive your way with the power of Hyundai.

Cha-cha info bid brought to N. Ecija

CABANATUAN CITY—Two weeks of consultation and information drive on proposed Charter changes started on Monday in Nueva Ecija.

Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Ante III said the first week of the debate would be held in government centers of the different municipalities and cities. In the second week, the activities will be conducted in the barangays.

He said the activities are being handled by government officials and private sector representatives who attended the orientation recently at the Nueva Ecija convention center.

Officials of the Jaycees of Lord Anthony Chamber of the Philippines attended the orientation in taking an consensus process.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(PBD 12-2006)

(PBD Bidding of Financial Advisory Services for the Privatization of Philippine Power Corporations)

1. The Privatization and Management Office (PMO), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), intends to procure the services of a financial advisor (FA) in connection with the privatization of Philippine Power Corp. ("Philpower").

The Approved Budget for the Contract ("ABC") is PHP[illegible] MILLION PESOS (PHP[illegible]), to be paid by PMO and/or Philpower, as the case may be, upon the award of the contract. VAT...

2. PMO now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent ("LOI") from potential bidders to apply for eligibility and bid using the Financial Advisory Services Agreement. The most updated draft [illegible] or before 2 June 2006 10:00 a.m. in the form of PMO-FAS-... Requirements, Procedure for a Meeting Set at PMO/BAC.

Submission for eligibility will be evaluated on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis. The last day for submission of the documents ("Eligibility Documents") for Eligibility using Requirements shall be on the date of the Opening of Eligibility Documents on 8 June 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, The Solaris II, [illegible] Village, Pasay City. Only those interested eligible shall be considered for short listing and only those that are short listed will be invited to submit bids.

3. The short list of prospective bidders shall be issued this 16 May. The criteria and rating system for short listing are:

a. 30%	General experience of the FA, considering both the overall experience of the firm and the individual experience of the principals and key staff, including relevant experience of the principals who have staff from previous engagements
b. 25%	Project-specific experience of the FA
c. 25%	Qualifications of personnel who may be assigned to the project
d. 20%	Current workload of the FA with the Philippine Government

4. In accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 ("RA 9184"), the Terms of Reference ("TOR") for the Financial Advisory Services Agreement ("FAS Agreement") are now available for interested parties. The TOR and the FAS Agreement may be purchased at the Privatization and Management Office, 2nd Floor, Solaris II, [illegible] Village, Pasay City during the deadline [illegible] Date Above (Immediate Issuance).

5. Any eligibility and short listing requirements and the short listing procedures may be obtained from Philpower at the address given below. Short listing will be on 9 June 2006, 10:00 a.m. at 6th Floor, The Solaris II, [illegible] Village, Pasay City. The deadline for submission of bids from the short listed firms shall be on 16 June 2006, 10:00 a.m.

6. The PMO/PHILPOWER reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any formality in the bid requirements, to declare the [illegible] to annul the bidding process at any time prior to the award of the contract without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to amend the contract to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Philippine Government.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
6th Floor, The Solaris Bldg.
[illegible] Village, Roxas Blvd.
Tel. Nos. 832-[illegible]
Fax No. 832-[illegible]
Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

Atty. EDUARDO B. LOPASAN
Deputy Privatization Officer and
Chairperson, PMO-BAC

PDI May 23 & 25, 2006

Bicol public schools need 1,700 teachers

LEGAZPI CITY—OFFICIALS OF the Department of Education in Bicol said each classroom in the region could accommodate as many as 70 to 80 students to cope with the expected increase in enrollment when classes are reported to open June and the teaching force is short of 1,700 in the region.

"It is a perennial problem. It will result in bigger classes to maximize the manpower we have," said Velma Cruz de Jesus, Deped regional planning unit chief.

Garcia pointed out that the shortage of teachers was mainly due to the scarcity of government funds to afford the hiring of more educators to address the increasing demand of students in the region.

"We lack classrooms. We lack books. We lack teachers. But the root of all these is the fact that our government is poor so we don't have a choice but to make our resources fit," Garcia said.

Enrollment is projected to increase by 2 to 3 percent this coming school year, both in the elementary and secondary levels, Celedonio Lanuza Jr., Deped Naga director, said in an interview with a local newspaper.

The actual enrollment figures in school year 2005-06 were 898,472 in the elementary level and 334,823 in high school, or a total of about 1.2 million students in the different public schools in Bicol.

Last school year, the region lacked only 750 teachers, which was lower by almost half this year.

Lanza said the Deped's solution to the problem of lack of teachers was to make full use of every classroom to fit in 70 to 80 students.

"That is the way to accommodate all the impoverished students in public schools even if we lack classrooms and teachers," he added.

Deped regional officials met on May 16 to discuss preparations for the opening of classes.

Also discussed in the meeting, the officials said, was the enforcement of a Deped memorandum that strictly prohibited the non-acceptance of poor students during enrollment who cannot afford to pay school contributions and miscellaneous fees immediately.

Every year, students face the problem of increasing costs of education as schools increase tuition every time classes open.

In General Luna, at least 30 private colleges and universities are raising tuition and other fees by 3 to 20 percent for school year 2006-07, a report from the regional Commission on Higher Education on Tuesday showed.

Most of the approved increases were beyond the 7.6-percent national inflation rate set by the National Economic and Development Authority this year.

The report said 21 other schools were seeking an increase of 3 to 15 percent. The CHED has disapproved only one application due to the late submission of requirements. Ephraim Agcaliw, *PIA Surigao*

with a report from Tonette Orejas, PIA Central Luzon Desk

MATABUNGKAY SUNSET
The sunset is a sight to behold at a beach in Matabungkay Resort in Lian, Batangas, that starred featuring makeshift rafts as a tourist attraction. The recent onslaught of tropical storm "Caloy" however, changed the scenery of the province, although temporarily.

1,000 families lose homes to fire in Cebu City

By Jhanna Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—MORE THAN 1,000 FAMILIES lost their homes to a fire that hit a densely populated village here yesterday morning.

SPO2 Felix Romero, investigator of the city fire department, said about 200 houses were destroyed in four cities in Barangay Banilad Pardo in the fire that broke out at 2:49 a.m.

The fire was put out at 4:33 a.m., or almost two hours later.

The cities were Villa San Pedro Geo, Villa San Pedro Ext., Kalunglungan and Uhoa-Pardo.

The fire started from the house of Khing Margolle and his five co-partners Leny Vallejo. It quickly spread because most of the houses were made of light materials and immediately engulfed the neighborhood until it was put out at 4:33 a.m.

Arnes was seen as the cause of the fire after a woman resident told Banak Pardo Barangay chair Roberto Cabarrubias that she heard Wilfredo and Margallo arguing at about 11 p.m. on Sunday.

The woman, identified as Ruffinco Begala, reportedly heard one of the couple threatening to burn their house. About four hours later, the fire broke out from the couple's house.

Cabarrubias brought Begala to the fire investigator, on her own, so could be questioned.

He said Begala also claimed that she smelled kerosene before the fire started.

WITH or without the meningococcus, 60% of the Philippine Military Academy are one of the reasons that visitors come to Baguio for. *PHOTO/BOY*

Baguio wants maid registration done to check child labor

BAGUIO CITY—MISHAPS IN 14 YEARold maid Jean Bello, who has turned to a career of note working as a professional housekeeper (housekeeper for Baguio's 288,000 households more than 10.

But until this week, Michon and about 12,000 under-aged teenaged workers remain invisible to the local government.

Officials of the summer capital are doubting an ordinance that would change that, by requiring all homes in region their domestic workers in a city listing.

Councilor Leandro Yangot, sponsor of the measure, said he wanted to regulate child domestic work, which he cited as "one of the oldest forms of child labor."

Homework is tolerated because children end up working safely within the confines of a home, although statistics indicate that even this form of child labor has resulted in cases of abuse, harassment.

The draft ordinance institutionalizes the city's "Kasambahay program," which will outline mandatory labor standards, decent employment and income, and access to social services.

It, however, also provides law to force their own their bank because of petty crimes attributed to domestic helpers.

"If equal concern . . . as employees of kasambahays who have equal rights to protection from their abuse and exploitation. There is a need to raise the consciousness [of] decision makers and the general public . . . by challenging myths still surrounding the employment of adults and children in domestic work," the measure said.

The proposed ordinance will require mandatory yearly registrations, although the city will not collect processing fees from maids.

Barangays are held responsible for keeping track of maids.

The measure's primary goal is to "end domestic child labor, in the extreme forms of child domestic work which is considered among the worst forms of child labor," Yangot said. Officer Gabriela, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio wants ₱3M over ad on meningo

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUMMER CAPITAL wants a Manila-based drug trading firm to fork over ₱3 million in damages for an April advertisement published in a broadsheet that implied a link between Baguio City and meningococcemia.

Mathieu Rabanes, city legal officer, filed the suit on May 17 against the Global Vaccine Exports (Glovax) for superimposing landmark images of Kennon Road like the Lateri's head, as well as the city's towers in Burnhal, Baguio, over an April 2 advertisement telling a vaccine against the fatal meningitis strain.

The city took Glovax to task for the following advertising pitch: "Going somewhere? Wherever you go viruses are waiting to welcome you, such as meningococcemia which can kill you in 24 hours."

The Baguio provincial government has announced plans to file a similar damage suit against the drug distributor.

Glovax employees said the firm has no official statement at press time, where the buyers reached their national office by telephone.

A criminal suit is also being prepared against Glovax, Rabanes told the business, because of recent evidence suggesting that the government has not even allowed Glovax's meningococcemia vaccine to be distributed domestically.

Rabanes cited a May 2 certification from the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration, which said that it had not approved Glovax's vaccine for Philippine distribution. The certification was issued by BFAD Director Lucita Barbara Gutierrez.

The city and parts of the Cordillera were struck by a meningococcemia outbreak, but fatalities were contained in a containment under the supervision of the World Health Organization.

A different meningococcemia strain struck other parts of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao during the same period, but hysteria surrounding the Baguio outbreak cost the city its tourism throughout most of 2003. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio tells legislator: Spare 'wagwag' from ban

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment has petitioned Sen. Ralph Recto to spare the consumer capital's tourist-drawing wagwag bonanza/flea market/bargain shelter/ harassed from a straightened anti-smuggling measure that bans the importation of used clothes.

The council said the city's wagwag trade had gone through proper customs procedures, and should not be part of a general policy against importing used clothing.

"The second-hand clothes being sold by local retailers are not smuggled into the Philippines, as, in fact, proper customs fees are paid by these legitimate entrepreneurs," said the draft council resolution.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, proposed the bill seeking to increase tariff rates on imports that have eroded trade in agriculture, as well as the manufacturing, petrochemical and automotive industries.

He earlier advised the Bureau of Customs to review old laws prohibiting the entry of used clothes, even rubber, ostensibly through special economic zones or free ports, citing health issues and implications on smuggling lines.

Malacañang's advisers on constitutional science is, in fact, pushing for new courses in the country's criminology schools that focus on modern industrial security.

Florencio Nuezo said the 17th National Convention on Criminology Education here last week that "the innocuous-sounding subject on esperia" was actually the new frontier for terrorism.

He told criminologists and school administrators that the importation of "innocuous-sounding materials," such as deep-freezing chemicals for rotten grounds, or sticked powders that is already abundant in the country, are also necessary elements for building weapons of mass destruction or biological bombs.

Nuezo imports over items of suspicion in the early part of the decade due to rumors that the clothes carry either anthrax or the former Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus.

But the council's draft resolution objects to wagwag's "tarnished reputation."

"There is no scientific study to prove that used clothing is a potential health hazard and even (former) Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit reported that contaminable diseases, such as meningococcemia (which struck in late 2004 and early 2005), cannot be acquired from buying used or second-hand clothes coming from disease-stricken countries," the resolution said.

MICRO ENTERPRISE
An entrepreneur sets up shop on a sidewalk in Oksaka, Batasan to display small pots that she makes herself and which she sells for P10 to P20 each. Entrepreneurs like her get a lot of encouragement, but barely any support, from the government.

'Caloy' damage in Visayas reaches ₱200M

By Hector P. Bergado
and Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Project Bureau

TAGUBAN CITY—DAMAGE TO infrastructure and agriculture left by tropical storm "Caloy" in Eastern and Western Visayas reached close to P200 million.

The Office of the Civil Defense in Eastern Visayas (OCD) reported that P155.86 million worth of infrastructure and agriculture products were destroyed when Caloy hit the region on May 18.

The OCD in Western Visayas, on the other hand, estimated the damage to infrastructure in the region at P53.61 million and in agriculture, P9.34 million.

Adriano Feago, OCD regional director, said that based on a consolidated report dated May 20, Southern Leyte was the worst-hit with P139 million, while P16.86 million worth of crops, rice, corn and other agriculture products were destroyed.

Feago said Leyte suffered the most damage in infrastructure facilities at P74 million. Damage to agriculture, mostly fruits, was placed at P25,000.

About P50 million worth of infrastructure facilities was damaged in Northern Samar.

Damage to agriculture in the province was estimated at P1.967 million.

In Southern Leyte, the region's most flood-prone province, damage to infrastructure was placed at P23 million.

Landslides and floods displaced 9,11 families or 4,895 persons in nine villages in Ingod town, Southern Leyte.

ROUNDUP

Suspected NPA rebel killed

CABANATUAN CITY—A suspected New People's Army rebel was killed in a 15-minute clash with Army soldiers in San Jose City on Sunday, 11 Oct. Jose Katindig, commander of the 48th Infantry Battalion, identified the fatality as Andy Paredes, said to be the political guide of a platoon of the Nueva Ecija-Aurora-Bulacan Provincial Committee. Officials identified the second rebel killed as Elito Blancia. Barangay Upper Tayuman. Soldiers said government soldiers sustained a .303 Magnum revolver, medicines and undetermined documents from the rebs. Policemen who joined the bloodless forces reported seizing a 9-mm Uzi machine pistol and four firearms, he said.
Jonathan Reyes and Zenaida Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ex-Hagibis eyes Sulu

ILAGAN, Isabela—After losing his congressional bid in Bacolod City in 2004, singer-actor Sonny Parsons said he was considering running for a congressional seat in his father's native province of Sulu in 2007. Parsons' father is a native of Lusk in the second district of Sulu. "I have been contemplating of running in my father's home province. I have friends in Sulu (that political seat) in Bacolod," Parsons, 41, told the Inquirer. He joined an invitational shooting competition at the Isabela police office here. Parsons (real name: Jose Parsons Arquisola) is the brother of Senator Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, in the mayoral race there in 2001. He was a former Marikina councilor. Parsons, a member of the singing group Hagibis in the 1970s, has returned to the entertainment scene after he left politics.
Virgilio Vicencio Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Teachers assured of pay

CEBU CITY—Gov. Gwen Garcia assured four thousand public school teachers and education personnel in the Metropolitan Cebu Region in Mandaue-Mandaue that their salaries and other benefits will be paid on time. In past administrations, delayed salaries and nonremittance of payments for a season period to the Government Service Insurance System were among the common complaints of teachers from Cebu, Toledo, Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu and Bantayan. "We've seen these problems ... I don't want this to be repeated under my administration," said Arquisola, adding that "The salaries and benefits of teachers are beyond reform. "He warned that "those who will not follow my directive will be dealt with severely." Arquisola said the money intended for the salaries and benefits of teachers would never be used for other purposes.
Cecile C. Galvez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Peace Corps to train Muslims

ZAMBOANGA CITY—MEMBERS of the US Peace Corps visited Monday a week-long training for Muslim teachers on "conflict-affected" areas in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The volunteer group's program operation Gov Cayco said the training would be part of the Tulay Mindanao, a program funded by the US Agency for International Development which aims to improve quality and accessibility to basic education in Maguindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Lanao del Sur, and from Marawi City. "The volunteers will provide techniques and strategies in the context of Filipino culture. It is the only program in the Peace Corps world that involves technical assistance to communities without actually assigning volunteers to that area," Cayco said in a statement. The fourth Tulay Mindanao training program since 2002 will be held in Cebu. The three-team volunteers will teach subjects on reading comprehension, computer technology, mathematics and science. More than 600 volunteers work nationwide in the fields of education, youth, small business and health and the environment.
Jaydhey Bubon, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Hotel sues over closure; Pagcor welcomes rap

By Jillian Manonsoy
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Oriental International Resorts Ltd. (OIRL), a hotel and casino operation has filed criminal charges against officials of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. following the closure of its casino here.

The Pagcor men were very rude and they forcibly evicted the [illegible] casino, and he secured our security staff and hotel guests," said Hoo Boo Soon, OIRL chief executive officer.

Lawyer Angeline Hwang, OIRL vice president and legal head, filed cases of harassment and extortion against officials of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (Pagcor) in Olongapo City.

Hwang questioned the order issued by Pagcor, saying a proper court should have served the eviction order instead of Pagcor.

Pagcor revoked the LIRO's provisional authority to operate casino inside the freeport after the firm refused to remit to Pagcor the guaranteed minimum amount of P5 million a month as provided for by a 2000 amendment to the company's license to operate.

Pagcor granted the provisional authority to LIRC on March 17, 2003.

Carlos Sheridan Jr., Pagcor senior managing head, said the company's debt to Pagcor since March 2003 had reached more than P300 million, including interests.

SBMA police escorted Pagcor officials to Legazpi casino and padlocked the building's main door. They also served the closure order against Global Seaborne Casino.

Sheridan said Pagcor welcomed any charges that the LIRC would file against Pagcor and its employees.

"We are duty-bound to revoke the company's provisional authority and immediately stop all its casino operations," he said.

Jeers, cheers greet Vizcaya festival

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—THE province's week-long celebration of its 107th founding anniversary were in full swing on Saturday but was met with varied reactions from residents.

Organizers claimed success but other quarters noted that the event has lost its true spirit.

Since Friday, thousands of residents from Nueva Vizcaya's 15 towns have been trooping to the provincial capitol to watch the daily activities and exhibits in a trade fair showcasing each of the towns' best products.

Highlight of this year's Panagpanaw Festival was Saturday's mass tribal wedding festival, where the province's 15 indigenous groups gathered at the capitol lawn to stage the "grand" or traditional marriage among members of the Igorot tribe.

The ritual ended with the tug-of-war, a favorite local sports of featuring among the people of the Cordillera, according to Ysmya Liberto, president of the Nueva Vizcaya Tribal Council.

Led by Commissioner Cresente Sapnu of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the activity paid tribute to the 1.0 tribes comprising 45 percent of the province's residents: Ayangan, Bago, Bugkalot, Gaddang, Ifuluk, Ilong, Ishtot, Itelik, Kalanguya, Kankanaey, Tawali, Ayta, Kalinga and Ilonot.

Videoke

But some residents and women's groups criticized organizers over the proliferation of videoke bars within the capitol compound, the site of the celebration.

"This [event] is supposed to be an affair for the whole family. Whatever thoughts of having these (videoke bars) surround the children's playground may have lost their sense of morality or simply do not care about their children," said Orlando Velasquez, 57, a father of four.

Hernan were concerned that the beer joints, many of which employ women dressed in skimpy outfits and chasing clubs with stiff encounters, serve as lull sons of children playing at the park.

"Is this an idea of a prosperous [thanksgiving]? Is this what we came for to celebrate?" Velasquez asked.

"It's sad to see women being forced to engage in these activities for lack of job opportunities. These women may not at all be oblivious to the representation of being publicity seen, but what's in blame for an empty stomach?" said Trina Oliveros, spokesperson of the women's group Gabriela in Cagayan Valley.

Event organizers said having the videoke bars was intended to generate revenues to augment the P500,000 that was allotted for the 2006 festival.

Common practice

Nenad Idemdon Glenn Mas, Panagpanaw director general, said the presence of the videoke bars in the festival site was a common practice in the annual event.

"The girls that you saw may just be [socializing there as] waitresses," he told the Inquirer.

He denied that commercialism had dominated the event, saying the organizers were merely welcoming the support extended by festival sponsors.

Hilenda Blumen, acting chair of the event's ways and means committee, said the festivity had collected P1.9 million from donations and vendi rentals from the agro-industrial fair.

Figures on the amount collected from videoke bars, however, were still unavailable.
Michelle Guanzon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ONE OF the features of the Panagpanaw Festival, giant jackfruits, are displayed at a booth put up by Ifuluk town.

NEWS

Villar richest, Flavier 'poorest' in Senate

By Jaime Laya @inquirer

REAL ESTATE MAGNATE SEN. Manuel "Manny" Villar maintained his standing as the country's wealthiest lawmaker after reporting a networth of P760 million in 2005 or an increase of P340 million from the previous year.

As in the past, the Senate continued to be a millionaire's club with all but one of the 23 senators having net worths (assets minus liabilities) of more than P10 million.

Based on their 2005 Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Networth, only four senators made it to an exclusive circle of elite with networths of more than P100 million. They were senators Villar, Ralph Recto, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and Ms. Consuelo "Tingky" Madrigal.

Sen. Juan Flavier, who is serving his second and last term in senate, remained the "poorest" in the upper chamber although his networth rose by $1.4 million.

The 34th does not reflect the actual wealth of lawmakers because their assets are based on their acquisition values and not on their market values.

"I feel like a rarity among them," Flavier shadowboxer explained that like his colleagues, his property was based on acquisition values.

Villar, a former fish trader turned mega-entrepreneur, was handy in the top-notch list in spite of the fact that his networth rose by only 66.8 percent last year. His networth was P920.7 million.

It was a joint SAIS with his wife, Las Piñas City Rep. Cynthia Villar who also reigns supreme in the House of Representatives millionaire's club since her election in 2001.

Though he's worth "only" P501 million on paper, Villar is believed to be a billionaire, not in pesos but in dollars.

A recent Asiaweek magazine dubbed him "Asia's richest billionaire" reportedly worth $1.66 billion. This was based on the assets of C&P Homes, the Sterling-owned company Villar founded in the '70s and now touted as the "biggest homebuilder in Southeast Asia."

Villar served as congressman from 1992 to 1995, became Speaker and ran for the Senate in 2001. He is now Senate president-in-waiting and is believed to be eyeing the presidency in 2010.

A far second to Villar is Recto, who reported a networth of P287.3 million [P270.3 million more minus P11.1 million liabilities]. Recto served as Batangas representative from 1992-1995 and 2004-2004. He is the husband of actress and Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos.

In third place is Magsaysay, son and namesake of the late President Ramon Magsaysay, who has a networth of P206.6 million. Madrigal ranked fourth with P134.1 million. A longtime senator, she is the granddaughter of former Supreme Court Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos and former Sen. Vicente Madrigal.

The other senators and their networths are: 5. Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla - P99.6 million; 6. Sen. Jinggoy Estrada - P97 million; 7. Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile - P85 million; 8. Mar Roxas - P59.7 million; 9. Sen. Loi Ejercito - P76.3 million; 10. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago - P71 million

11. Sergio Osmeña III - P65.2 million; 12. Edgardo Angara - P56.2 million; 13. Luis Ejercito-Estrada - P52.6 million; 14. Rodolfo Biazon - P51.4 million; 15. Panfilo Lacson - P25 million; 16. Richard Gordon - P24.9 million; 17. Senate President Franklin Drilon - P21 million; 18. Francis Pangilinan - P14.3 million; 19. Juan Ponce Enrile - P11 million; 20. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. - P10.9 million; 21. Manuel "Lito" Lapid - P10.9 million; 22. Alfredo Lim - P10.8 million; 23. Flavier - P1.4 million.

Liz Ejercito, wife of detained President Joseph Estrada who is on trial for allegedly plundering P4 billion, has the biggest liabilities worth P169.1 million. "I have a lot of mortgages," she quipped.

Recto, scion of the dynastic Puno clan, had the second biggest liabilities worth P5.4 million, followed by Gordon and Revilla.

Enrile, Marcos' former defense secretary, declared real estate properties worth P1,000 as part of his P87 million assets. He had no liabilities. He said he bought his property in Cagayan "a long, long time ago."

Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil
Tell us your feelings: inquirer.net name/age/city/message to 2200 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: p_metro@inquirer.com.ph

2 cops, 2 ex-PAF pilots nabbed for drugs

By Margaux C. Ortiz

TEN PEOPLE, INCLUDING TWO policemen and two retired Philippine Air Force pilots—one of them a former lieutenant colonel who used to be a squadron commander—were presented to media yesterday following their arrest by authorities last week for illegal drug-related cases.

Eight of the suspects were caught by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation while selling shabu, the other Tuesday, in a house allegedly used as a drug den inside Sterville Hub Subdivision in Pamplona City.

NBI acting Director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspects as Gregorio Santiago, 42, the owner of the alleged drug den, located at 1 Israel Street; Chief Inspector Robert Mendoza Cabot, 48, assigned at the Philippine National Police Holding Center in Camp Crame; his brother Jeoffrey Cabot, 43, a former Air Force pilot assigned to the 15th Strike Wing stationed in Sangley Cavite, and retired Lt. Col. Meri Hernandez, 48, who was formerly the squadron commander of the helicopter wing in Villamor Airbase.

Also arrested were Wenceslao Mendoza Jr., Ronald V. Nuesa, Jeremias Pedrosa and Solaiman Lamanggal.

Mantaring said the suspects, who were caught in the act of selling methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), all tested positive for the drug.

EIGHT of the suspects (in orange T-shirts, and with glasses, front) are shown as they were presented to the media yesterday. BEN CAMBA

The Manila Police District, on the other hand, announced the arrest yesterday of PO1 Jester Arciaga, 26, of the MPD Anti-Illegal Drugs Unit and his companion Jhun Ann Arriola, 28.

MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulseng said the two were nabbed on Sunday on Gen. Geronimo Street in Sampaloc, Manila, after Station 4 chief Jose Antayo received information about their alleged illegal activities. Police said they seized four sachets containing suspected shabu from the pair.

NBI Marielito Arwee and Interdiction Division (IADU) chief Raul Bulieve said his unit had received information that Santiago's house was allegedly being used as a drug den.

"Our surveillance cameras showed that suspected drug users would often go in and out of the house for shabu sessions," Bulieve said in a press conference yesterday.

NBI and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) operatives conducted the raid last May 16. They seized 10.9 grams of shabu, valium tablets, drug paraphernalia, a list of drug deals, and a live hand grenade.

"We have recommended that administrative charges be filed against Roberto Cabot, who is still in the active service," Mantaring said.

Santiago, speaking for the group, admitted that he and his friends used drugs on a regular basis.

Charges for violation of Unpub. lic Act 6234 (Illegal Possession of Explosives) and Section 6 (Maintenance of a Drug Den) and Section 11 (Possession of Dangerous Drugs) of Republic Act 9165 or Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 have been filed against Santiago.

Mantaring said the rest of the suspects face charges for violation of Section 7 (Visitors of a Drug Den), Section 15 (Use of Dangerous Drugs) and Section 12 (Possession of Drug Paraphernalia) of RA 9165.

Did killer shoot the wrong target?

By DJ Yap and Photos de Quiroz

THE BROTHER OF A DENR assistant of Environment and Natural Resources employee was shot dead yesterday in Quezon City, in what police suspect was a case of mistaken identity.

Johnny Dangasan, 32, was gunned down on board a Toyota Revo-type owned by his brother Samuel Dangasan, who works for the DENR's anti-illegal logging task force.

Johnny was driving on Villarin Street and slowly turning to travel Quirino Highway in Cubao, Novaliches, at 7:30 a.m. yesterday, when a man appeared on his left and shot him with a .45-caliber pistol, police said.

'Work-related'

Investigator PO2 Silvio de la Cruz said the man probably intended to kill Samuel over a work-related issue, but mistook Johnny for his target, since the victim was using his brother's vehicle.

The gunman escaped while Johnny was rushed to the Novaliches General Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

Big Man gets back

A NEW PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM, "Sumbong Mo! (Tulfo Reviews)," was launched last Saturday, May 20, on RPN 9. The program, hosted by my brothers Raffy and Erwin and myself, replaced "Sumbong mo kay Tulfo" hosted by our uncle.

We've received many text messages and calls saying the show's first episode was very promising. Some said it was a first on Philippine TV since three brothers, all in media, are in one show. "Sumbong" is a public service show that aims to help aggrieved citizens get justice. But the first episode was nearly cancelled before its scheduled airing on the government-sponsored station.

Somebody very influential and very vindictive—let's call him Big Man—wanted the show canned. He pulled tanks trying to have the show's first episode replaced with a canned program. To its credit, the RPN Board headed by its chair, Secretary Ike Seno Media Group Cesge Bermudez, stood up to him and aired the show. Now, Bermudez is in danger of losing his job. The Big Man was quoted by an inside source as having told Bermudez: "If you don't follow my instructions, you had better look for another job." Other RPN officials, like president and CEO Mia Concio, might also lose their jobs.

My source quoted Bermudez as telling the Big Man: "Sir, sigurado ito, let's get this case with. I can't cancel the show because we would be sued if we do it."

I was in the province last Saturday and felt like crying when I heard about the Big Man's last minute order. What had I done to merit his rage? We stand to be very good friends, until I followed the dictates of my profession. Until last Saturday, I tried to understand his arms-up look (hard feelings) for exposing the requested smuggling conviction of his alleged girlfriend and her brother. But he should also understand that I'm a journalist sustained by public interest. As a result of my exposé, the Bureau of Customs increased its collections by leaps and bounds. Nobody had the guts to tell the Big Man that the girl and her brother were using his name for their illegal activities.

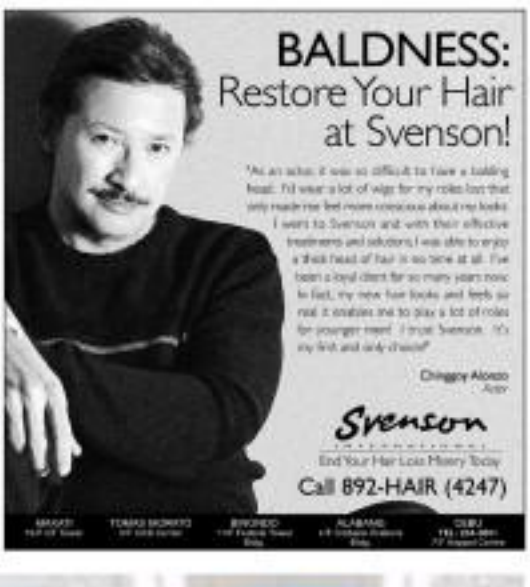
I thought that this episode would somehow be forgotten with the passing of time. Friends, like lovers, quarrel sometimes, but they kiss and make up afterward. Into this friend, the's endearing and he uses his influence to get back at people who have hurt him.

Days after I wrote that exposé, he approached the owners of a radio station where I had my daily public service program, "Sumbong mo kay Tulfo," and asked him to fire me. The owner, a mutual friend, told him he couldn't do it because I was under contract and I hadn't committed any infraction. The Big Man then went to RPN 9 where I was about to sign my "Sumbong" contract to be a co-production scheme that would make me a talent. I would share in the production cost, like paying the other talents, but I would not pay for airtime. The Big Man ordered the station to make me pay for airtime, as well as all the production costs. Where can you find a public service show that helps people get fair rate, paying for airtime? The Big Man thought the onerous scheme would deter us from going on with the show. But Erwin, Raffy and I agreed to the scheme since we consider it our mission to help others.

I hope the Big Man would leave me alone. A cornered animal can do more harm.

ON TARGET

RAMON TULFO



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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quirico

Thaksin considers return as full-time Thai premier

BANGKOK—THAKSIN SHINAWATRA MAY RETURN AS THAILAND'S full-time prime minister, ending a break from politics he took last month amid street protests, the government spokesperson said Monday.

Thaksin resigned some of his major duties Monday, including trying to tackle a bloody Muslim insurgency in the country's southern provinces. Spokesperson Jurapholng Jitsiriwongsa said Thaksin might resign or still remain in his role as prime minister, but the decision was due to be announced October that appointed Chitchai Wannasathit as interim prime minister.

A source by Thaksin would renew tensions and probable street demonstrations by the People's Alliance for Democracy, a coalition that orchestrated nuclear protests. Opposition parties have boycotted elections, saying that they would lead to a conflict.

"Everyone is saddened by Thaksin's announcement to step down over claims that they unfairly favor Thaksin's government.

In an unrelated case, the Supreme Court on Monday before a criminal court to reconvene Thailand on face charges of abuse of duty. The charge carries a minimum penalty of 10 years in prison. AP

"There are a lot of problems. I will have to tackle them because it will be a long time until a new election is held," Thaksin told reporters over the weekend.

The embattled Election Commission on Monday proposed a further delay in plans for new elections until Oct. 29, after Thaksin officials said the earlier date, Oct. 22, was flawed with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

But neither date may hold since the commissioners are under pressure from the court to step down over claims that they unfairly favor Thaksin's government.

THAILAND'S Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra waves to the media at the Government House in Bangkok May 22. REUTERS

Thousands march worldwide against child hunger

ROME—FROM ROME TO ACCRA, land to Helsinki, hundreds of thousands of people let their feet do the talking on Sunday in the UN World Food Program's (WFP) annual march against child hunger.

The first participants set off in Auckland, capital of New Zealand, on the few kilometers walk, which was followed by marchers in the capitals of Lithuania, Bangladesh and Liberia, and on the island of Samoa.

In Italy, where the WFP is based, around a dozen teams were taking part in the event, from Genoa in Sicily to Turin in the north.

A rally in Ghi Italian capital on Sunday morning drew thousands, amid of Ghi children and their young people, members of sports organizations and NFP employees, the organization's spokesperson Michelle Riccio told AFP.

Pope Benedict XVI hailed the initiative during Sunday prayers in St. Peter's Square in Rome. He praised the hope that "thanks to everyone's contributions we will be able to combat the plague of hunger that still afflicts humanity."

In central Moscow, the procession mostly teenagers wearing blue berets and T-shirts that read: "Help us help feed hungry children in the world's schools," independent radio station Echo Moskvy reported.

"This will mean that Russia, which not long ago was a recipient of international aid, supports efforts to help people dying of hunger around the world," said march organizer Dmitri Peskov, quoted by the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Some 6,000 people including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres turned out for a 10-km walk around Portugal's capital, Lisbon, Guterres said after the march it was "intolerable" that the WFP did not have sufficient funds to fight hunger.

In the Czech capital Prague, organizers said the march would raise money for food programs in Tanzania and Afghanistan. In the Central Asian country alone one out of four children die before reaching the age of five, Czech senator and journalist Jaromir Sverina told the CTK news agency.

In Tanzania, thousands including a large number of school-children gathered at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro carrying placards reading, "Fight Hunger: Walk the World," AFP spokesperson Heather Hill told AFP.

A group of athletes who had completed their ascent of Kilimanjaro the previous day to mark the event also joined the march, as did Tanzanian Prime Minister Edward Lowassa.

And in Asia, WFP employee Mark Gaylord marched the event on Thursday by walking Everest.

Other Walk the World events were held in Madrid, New Delhi, Islamabad, Amman, Aleshaus and in several other African countries.

The walk the world event "is about creating a movement to end child hunger," said Ashraf Mitchell, director of the walk for WFP, in a statement.

"By engaging citizens from rich and poor countries alike, governments worldwide will heed the call, and will do more to end child hunger," said Mitchell.

The event's organizers expected more than 700,000 people to take part worldwide. Almost 100,000 children were expected to take part in sub-Saharan Africa alone, many of them beneficiaries of WFP programs.

The WFP says some 300 million children across the world suffer from chronic malnutrition, a figure it aims to cut in half by 2015.

Ramin Rahimiane, a spokesperson for the organization, said it hoped to raise $1 million from the event. AFP

THOUSANDS of poor and displaced people from the Pader district of Northern Uganda participate May 21 in the UN World Food Program's (WFP) "Fight Hunger: Walk the World" march against child hunger, aimed at raising funds for the WFP. AFP

US won't guarantee security of Iran

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States is not offering security guarantees to Iran to end its nuclear program, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Tuesday.

"Security guarantees are not on the table," Rice said ahead of new international talks this week about the Iran diplomatic crisis.

"It's obvious that in addition to the nuclear issue, we have other issues with Iran. We have a desire to see that it devoted to the elimination of Israel. We have a room to knock that meddler on the peace process" in the Middle East, Rice said on Fox News television.

British, France and Germany have drawn up a package aiming to persuade Iran to end its uranium enrichment, which the United States and its allies believe hides an effort to build a nuclear bomb.

The European proposals are to be discussed at a meeting in London on Wednesday of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, along with Germany.

Iran is also to be a key issue in talks when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert makes his first official visit to Washington this week.

Olmert told CBS television on Sunday that he believes Iran is just a few months, rather than a few years, from acquiring the technological expertise needed to build a nuclear bomb.

According to media reports, the Europeans are to have asked Washington to provide guarantees that no security threat would be made to the Iranian government. Rice strongly denied such a request had been made.

"First of all, let me just set the record straight. We haven't been asked to provide security assurances to Iran," she said. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

WHO chief dies after emergency operation

GENEVA—Lee Jong-wook, the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), died Saturday after undergoing emergency brain surgery, the South Korean foreign ministry said. "Lee died after undergoing an operation in Geneva," said ministry spokesperson Choi Young-Jin. Lee, 57, was rushed to the hospital Saturday and underwent emergency operation on a blood clot in the brain, a WHO spokesperson told AFP. The foreign ministry said Lee, who was elected to lead the UN health agency in 2003 for a five-year term, is survived by his wife Hoshi Kendall-Lee and a son. Funeral arrangements will be announced later. Lee received a doctoral degree from Seoul National University, and a master's degree in public health from the University of Hawaii. AFP

7 dead, 32 hurt in Indian Kashmir attack

SRINAGAR, India—At least seven people died and 32 were injured as Islamic militants attacked hundreds of a political event in Indian Kashmir's summer capital ahead of peace talks on the region, police said. Police said the gunmen, who lobbed grenades and opened fire on a packed public meeting in Srinagar's Nowa locality, dropped after they were fired on by militants who had attacked with rifles and hand grenades. "Seven, at least reports that those civilians, but officials are said a policeman have died in this said," a senior police officer said, adding that at least 32 people had been admitted to hospitals with medical records. "Two injured people, all Mohammadan small civilians in Kabir, Jammu and Kashmir officials, for Ben Khan.

Kuwait's emir dissolves parliament

KUWAIT CITY—Kuwait's emir dissolved parliament and called for new elections on June 29, saying he was forced to act to safeguard security and national unity amid a deepening political crisis. Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah made the announcement in a televised speech after opposition MPs considered the emir's executive powers and found in the 28-seat parliament. Sheikh Sabah, 78, took power in January only after a rare emir succession in Kuwait following the death of the previous emir. The next to decree 14 MPs the year 2006 parliament will be dissolved," said the emir's decree. Qatar Sabah, 78, took power in January only after a rare emir succession in Kuwait following the death of the previous emir. The next to decree 14 MPs the year 2006 parliament will be dissolved," said the emir's decree. Qatar Sabah, 78, took power in January only after a rare emir succession in Kuwait following the death of the previous emir. The next to decree 14 MPs the year 2006 parliament will be dissolved," said the emir's decree. AFP

Montenegro votes to end union with Serbia

PODGORICA, Serbia-Montenegro—Montenegro Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic on Monday proclaimed victory for the pro-independence coalition in a referendum on ending the country's union with Serbia, a result confirmed tonight by the director of the people of Montenegro, an independent Montenegro has been restored," Djukanovic told his supporters. Djukanovic said that 55.5 percent of those who have voted in Sunday's referendum "have wanted for a renewal of the independent state of Montenegro." That result is nearly equivalent to the 55 percent majority that the pro-independence coalition had set as a minimum target. Jovo Bakic, head of the republican election commission, said that with 86 percent of the votes counted, the "yes" camp had garnered 48,000 more votes than the 419,240 votes supporting the union with Serbia. AFP

Verdict on Ethiopia's ex-dictator due

ADDIS ABABA—HEINOUS CRIMES Mariam, accused of a 17-year reign of terror in Ethiopia, faces a long-awaited genocide verdict on Tuesday in a trial of Africa's new murders, in which he is accused of ordering the deaths of tens of thousands of his opponents.

The former Marxist ruler, now nearing 70 and living in comfortable exile in Zimbabwe, is accused of killing tens of thousands of people after toppling Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

In the most notorious purge, the Red Terror, thousands of suspected opponents were rounded up, executed by garroting or shooting. Then forced into the streets.

Mengistu fled to Zimbabwe in 1991, but has been the subject of a 23-year trial in absentia in Addis Ababa.

The prosecution blames the lengths case on the complexity of the proceedings but Ethiopia is hoping to close the door on a painful era underscored deep wounds troubled by the delay.

"I know that even if Mengistu and all his supporters are sentenced to death, there is no way I will get my son back," said Abebe Gelaw, 60, a pensioner whose son was accused of having an opposition supporter and executed in the 1977-78 Red Terror.

"But the same, I want justice to be done."

Most of Africa's many former strongmen-rulers in the decades since independence have avoided facing legal charges. But several have been overthrown by civil unrest, paving the way for trials.

Liberian warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor became the first African leader last month to stand before an international court in Sierra Leone, where he awaits trial on 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

And in Paris, an African Union summit is to decide whether to extradite former Chad President Hissene Habre to Belgium to face charges of mass murder and torture during his 1982-1990 rule.

The International Criminal Court is also pushing war crimes in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Reuters

FBI accuses congressman of taking bribes

WASHINGTON—THEIR CHARGED on Sunday (Sat May. William J. Jefferson, a Louisiana Democrat, with receiving more than a thousand of dollars in bribes by a Kentucky businessman and trashed $90,000 of that money in his home freezer in Washington.

The allegations appeared in court documents that were made public after a search of Jefferson's congressional office. FBI officials said the raid was the first the agency had ever conducted of a member's office on Capitol Hill.

The FBI's warrant and other documents, which were unsealed in US District Court in Washington, accused the eight-term lawmaker of accepting bribes to help a small technology company win contracts with federal agencies and with businesses and governments in Nigeria and Ghana. Jefferson is one of several members of Congress who are under scrutiny by the Justice Department in corruption charges.

While the outline of the case against Jefferson has been known for months, the court papers released on Sunday were the first in which he was linked by name to the bribery charges and to Kentucky businessman Vernon Jackson, the founder of the company that sought his help in winning contracts for its high-technology products.

The documents revealed that many of Jefferson's contacts with people involved in the bribery scheme were secretly taped, including a videotape of a meeting last July at which the lawmaker received a briefcase containing $100,000 in $1 00 bills.

The FBI said that $90,000 of that money was found in a cold on Jefferson's Washington home last August, divided into $10,000 increments and then placed in "various home food containers and wrapped in aluminum foil." The court documents said the money was supposed to be used to pay a middleman—his name is blacked out in the court papers—who might be involved in several contracts in Nigeria, an oil-rich nation plagued by government corruption.

JEFFERSON

In an impassioned news conference last week in New Orleans, Jefferson insisted that he was innocent of wrongdoing and would not resign from the House, even if indicted. He said prosecutors had shown "no love" for him in the worst possible light. "

New York Times News Service

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SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa

R'Shine, G. Goose eye semis /A22

WHAT'S INSIDE

Lady Pirates catch last bus to semifinals /A23

BP fencers still SEA champions

Hingis takes first title since return /A24

Hot Pistons shackle James, expel Cavs /A24

So sparks romp over Mauritius

By Ray Luarca

TURIN, ITALY—GRANDmaster Rogelio Antonio Jr. completed what Fide Master Wesley So started as the Philippine men's team blanked Mauritius, 4-0, in the first round of the 37th Chess Olympiad at the Olympic Village here Sunday.

The 12-year-old So, youngest ever Filipino Olympiad, punched on Pamela Mante's bishop opening to win with the black pieces in just 30 moves of a Sicilian set-round 4.

Handling white, Antonio took 42 moves to dispose of his Philippine opening on board 3 and prepares his chess stars in the last two subsequent rounds today.

In between, FM Oliver Dimakiling and master Darwin Laylo trounced Slovenjan Chiramonty and Patrick Li Ying on board 2 and 3, respectively, enabling the 35th-seeded NL pieces to share the early lead in the round 1-46-team matchfield.

GRANDMASTER Rogelio Antonio Gives the forget-it to win his match, beating Mor Philips of Mauritius in 42 moves of a Modern opening.

The 21-year-old Dimakiling beat Chramonty in 35 moves of a Dutch while Fide-lister RP Darlo Laylo, after 20, downed Li Ying in 24 moves of a Scandinavian defense.

"Perfect start," said team captain Sammy Gaviola. "Just what we need to boost the players' morale."

It was the other way around for the women's team, however.

The 30th-ranked Filipina loosed to the No. 8 Germans, 0.5-3.5, with only rookie Shirelly Cua managing a draw with Weitao GM Hua Jiangwen on board 3.

The Filipinas, fighting to better their 19th-place effort at the 2004 Calvia Olympiad, settle for 42 Luxembourg in the second round Monday (9 p.m. in Manila).

Against Luxembourg, 4-4 underdog of Rhinestohope, Eileen suffer holding the young Turks led by GM Mark Paragua.

With GM Eugene Torre, the top chair board 2 player, and Antonio, the board 3 player, taking a rest, Laylo moved up to board 2, Dimakiling still for on board 3 and Jocelyn board 4.

Woman IM-elect Sherie Joy Lotilla was one point up but blundered during the time scramble to yield to German IM Semeniuk for the draw.

Perena, on the other hand, dropped a dramatic position in a rook bishop against rook ending.

Pioneer's crown aspirant Cesar Catada said he'll be fielding back Lotilla on board 2, Jocelyn Cua on board 3 and let WIM Jewelly Mendiana-Jamilla board 4 against IEst Ireland, which hosted to Moldova, 2.5-1.5.

The duel's shocker was Montero's 3-1 win over second-ranked India, which retained the services of GM Viswanathan Anand, the world's No. 2.

Top favorite Russia and 33 other countries, including Ukraine, also posted perfect 4.0 points in the men's division, 14-heading champion Ukraine and China were among those with 3.5 points.

SEA Games champs back in RP Open badminton

Rain or Shine, Granny Goose eye semifinals

Pro-am today kicks off 90th RP Open golf

James Yap keeps hurting Giants afloat

Cheats are here to stay

Seeded nat'l age-group chess players hold sway

Lady Pirates catch last bus to semis

LYCEUM SURVIVED A LATE STAND TO FIGHT BACK TO EDGE OUT A 25-20, 23-25, 23-25, 25-22, 15-12 victory yesterday and clinch the last semifinal berth in the V-League presented by Shakey's Pizza at the Ultra Eight Gym.

Sheridan Cardin and Gee Gee Lepasana combined for 42 hits, including 35 on kills, as the Lady Pirates completed their surge from sixth place to joint third alongside the San Sebastian Lady Stags with their fourth win in seven games. That was enough to snatch the fifth and last slot in the best-of-seven.

The Lady Eagles closed out the single-round eliminations with a 1-6 card, marred by six straight losses, in the tournament presented by Shakey's Pizza and backed by Accel, Mikasa, ABC-5 and RBC Sports.

Beau, the Intramuros-based spikers joined La Salle (8-0) and Adamson (5-1), which were still playing as premiums, for Eastern and San Sebastian in the semifinals, a double-round robin phase where they will carry their respective (win-loss) records in the eliminations.

The Lady Pirates will reunite on June 1, also at the Ultra Eight Gym, with crippled rivals pegged at 9pm and 11pm first. Admission is free in the general admission, according to the organizing Sports Vision.

"Our defense slid a," said Lyceum coach Emil Lontoc, who steered the country to its last women's doubleout Asian Games gold medal in the 1995 Singapore edition, in Filipino.

But the Lady Pirates had to go through some anxious moments before pulling off the win.

Taking the first two sets with relative ease, Lyceum turned cold and played listlessly dropping the third set it dominated in the early going, then nearly blew a 13-point lead in the fourth.

Down 9-16, Arnisa sent in Michelle Lalimen, who unleashed an impressive net game with her superb blocking and deserving spikes to rally the Lady Eagles to within, 20-22.

But Lepasana, who was action for the Lady Archers last conference, and Cardin stepped up and blasted through Lalimen's defense with crisp hits to foil the Lady Eagles' bid to send the game into a deciding fifth set.

"We got overconfident in the last two sets," said Lontoc.

ATENEO'S Marissa Ravinina punishes a hole in the Lyceum defense put up by Glenda Pineda (left) and Beverly Belo in the third set.

RP fencers still SEA champions

FILIPINO FENCERS BAGGED EIGHT GOLD, nine silver and 10 bronze medals to retain the Southeast Asian championships recently at the Philippine Arena in Ning City.

Emerson Reyes, Jose Carlo Rovero, Rustico Jacinto and Mary Rose Alforque ruled the individual men's foil, men's saber, men's junior saber and women's junior saber, respectively.

The men's foil team of Reyes, Ramil Fajardo, Rolando Canlas and Patrick Cuenca, men's saber team of Rovero, Wilfred Mendoza, Edmon Wee and Jasmine, women's saber squad of Anne Franquelli, Lenka Reyes, Wendy Mendoza and Mary Rose Alforque and the women's foil team of Molly Angeles, Kenia Navarro, Michelle Menendez and Dina Bernardo in the end to complete the Philippines' eight-gold haul.

Vietnam finished second overall with 5-7-6-9 (gold-silver-bronze-total), Malaysia and Singapore captured four golds each, and Brunei won its first international gold medal in the event organized by the Philippine Amateur Fencing Association and sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission.

More than 200 fencers from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines competed in the biggest regional fencing tournament.

Malaysia and Indonesia dented the limelight in the Cadets (under 17) level but the Filipinos showed their might in the junior and Sports categories.

The Filipinos entered the events four in division in 1991 and successfully defended it since then.

Valencia five posts record win margin

VALENCIA CITY — Melessa Golden-Herrera posted the most lopsided victory so far in the 2002 Governor Rhonda MBC summer basketball championship Tuesday night by blasting the visiting Laguna Bus Boat Pirates, 130-74, at the city gym.

Dan Cahilig spearheaded with 25 points as the Golden Archers, bounded by assistant coach Bob Tagaytay and city sports coordinator Pico Ochu scored their second straight win and four in nine games.

The Dancers of Gov. Rowena "Ningning" Lanzon and Sta. Rosa Mayor Jose Kintanar stuffered their eighth straight loss.

Valencia emerged surging, opening a 31-16 first-quarter lead and never looked back to finish with a second 36-point margin.

The Pirates played minus stoppers Wil Domingo and coach Vic Bautista, who are part of the Epang Cushing Oil-backed MBC Selection that will fly to Uyanan today to compete in the Visa Liga together.

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
P. Tagaytay	5	2
Cabanatuan	5	4
Spring/Palace	4	3
Balanga Tagaytay	4	4
Pangasinan	2	7
Laguna/L. Rosa	0	8
South Division		
Quezon Cities	7	1
Agan Crusaders	6	2
North Caballeros	5	3
Pagadian	5	3
Valencia	4	5
Iloilo/Warriors	1	8

VALENCIA 130—Golden 25, Tagay 24, Cachero 19, Ochu 14, Cabahug 11, Mendoza 10, Bautista 6, Cabral 4, Tamayo 2, Hechanova 2, Salcedo 1, Lanzo 1.

LAGUNA 74—Rosario 20, Pizarro 12, Rojo 12, Bolano 7, Bulanadi 5, Perez 5, Flores 2, Blancaflor 2, Ignacio, Ilyd, Bayot 0, Aquino 0.

Scores: 31-16, 32-41, 80-62, 130-74.

4th Sherwood Invitationals set May 26-27

THE FOURTH SHERWOOD HILLS INVITational, the member-guest tournament of the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite, will be played on May 26-27 with an expected field of 170 participants.

Play will be four-some or a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. tee time scheduled for both days.

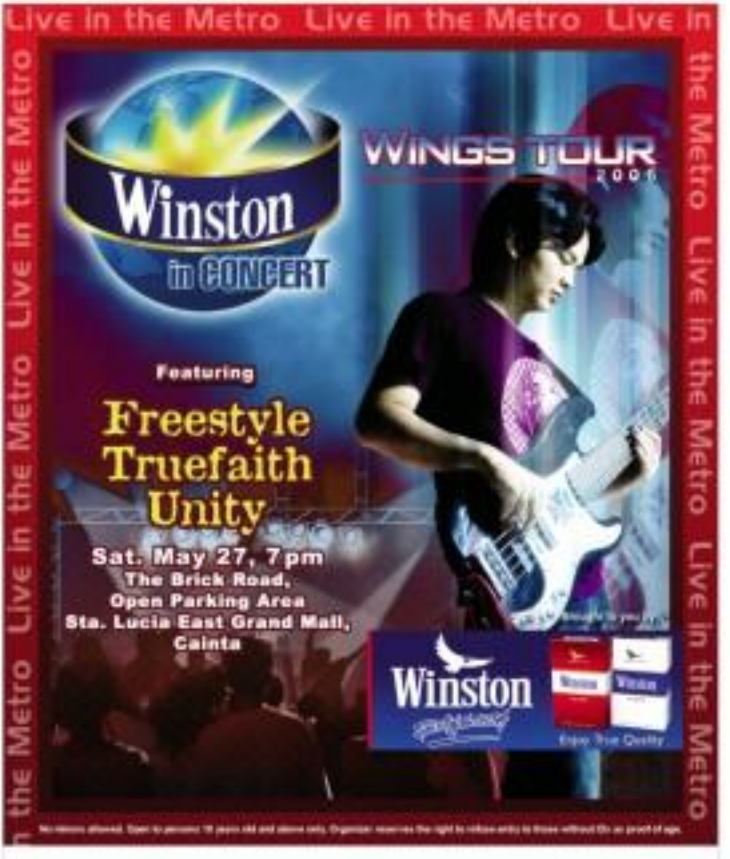
There will be two formats—best ball for the first day and aggregate for the second day. Awards to be disputed are the overall low net and low gross in divisions I and II.

Sherwood Hills chief of the board Bob Schlenger will hit the ceremonial drive together with Team Martina Moore for Sugar on Thursday.

Major sponsors of the event are Fullerton Club Leisure Management and MFI.

The other sponsors are Birkshire Golf, Camp Aguinaldo Golf, Federal Motors(ford), Bush Sac, Manila Southwoods Manor Warbird Security Agency, Sports Specialist, Corporate Air and Information Professionals Inc.

Each participant will receive a premium Bada Project Hymenaa as a giveaway.



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SPORTS

Hot Pistons shackle James, expel Cavs

CLEVELAND'S LeBron James stumbles and loses control as Detroit's Rasheed Wallace looks on. AP

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—IN A SINGLE RALLY THE Detroit Pistons taught LeBron James everything he needs to know about defense in the playoffs—and finished off yet another series comeback.

While Detroit moves on to its fourth straight Eastern Conference finals, the 21-year-old Cleveland Cavaliers superstar is left to ponder his shooting woes.

"They trapped me, they went under screens, they were over screens," said James, who was held to one second-half field goal Sunday in the Cavs' 79-61 Game 7 loss to Detroit. "I've seen almost every defense that I could possibly see for the rest of my career in this series."

Playing in his first postseason, James was sensational at times for Cleveland, pushing the fifth favorites to the brink of elimination.

"There's nobody on his level that can get his teammates involved like he does," said Tayshaun Prince, who led the Pistons with 20 points. "He runs the plays before they even happen, and no one else does that. That's the reason they were seven games."

The Cavs were down by only four at halftime, then Detroit simply smothered James in the second half and took command with a 29-6 run that started in the third quarter and ended with a 69-52 lead midway through the fourth. James and the upstart Cavs, first-year standouts helpless when it mattered most.

The Cavs led 2-2 in the second-round series and had a chance to eliminate the Pistons at home in Game 6 largely because Miami ran Detroit out of the building in Game 5. The heat have been sending their eliminating flew Jersey last Tuesday.

The Pistons are the first team to reach the conference finals in four straight years since the Chicago Bulls did it from 1990-93. Detroit has remained among the NBA's elite in recent years by sweeping down on defense when necessary. But Jame ordered in the second half bucks against a franchise in the second round for the first time since 1991. AP

PAINFUL: Utah Phoenix guard Steve Nash. AFP

Nash ready for ultimate shoot-out

PHOENIX—STEVE NASH AND THE REST OF the Phoenix Suns got some much-needed rest for their second Game 7 of three playoffs.

They will face a Los Angeles Clippers team playing the biggest game in that franchise's mostly sad history.

The winner Monday night advances to the Western Conference finals, where the Clippers never have been.

"It's the ultimate," Nash said after Sunday's practice. "I think both teams are going to be extremely prideful and really play with a lot of emotion. I think it will be a great game."

The winner will be played in front of tenacious, orange-clad packed house at 18 Arizona Center, where the Suns blew out their other Los Angeles team, the Lakers, in Game 1 of the first round.

"I don't anticipate a Lakers Game 7," the Suns' Raja Bell said. "I think they're probably more up for the challenge than the Lakers were as far as being ready to play."

Nash shed a little more light on the nature of his struggles in the series, where his shooting has been off and he hasn't moved in the style that made him the league's Most Valuable Player for the second year in a row.

Nash has a thyroid-level ailment he has had to deal with for years. At times, the muscles around the damaged area don't provide the support he needs. AP

• NBA as TV
SOLAS SPORTS • LA Clippers vs Phoenix (10:30 p.m.)

Home court advantage may favor defending champions

DALLAS—TIM ROSE TURNED INTO more than just a rebounding machine for Michael Finley as soon as he saw four bands in close succession.

When the Spurs' team plane arrived at home early Saturday, about 1,000 fans were there to congratulate them for rallying from a 3-1 deficit to force a Game 7 in their second-round series against the Dallas Mavericks.

Even more than the atmosphere will be like in San Antonio on Monday night for the conference finals or later game.

"This is the benefit of having one of the best records in the league," forward Bruce Bowen said Sunday.

San Antonio earned that edge by winning 63 games in the regular season.

Last June, the Spurs benefited from being at home for their last Game 7, beating the Detroit Pistons in the NBA Finals to claim their second title in three years and their fourth overall.

Teaming with the 2001 postseason, home teams have won 23 of 26 overall games.

"We've won big games on the road all season and we've seen in their building already in the playoffs," leading scorer Dirk Nowitzki said.

The Mavs failed to wrap things up Friday because their offense stood the same without guard Jason Terry, who was suspended for punching Finley.

"We've played each other 10 times this year and it's fun and fun," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich. AP

• NBA as TV
SOLAS SPORTS—Game 7: San Antonio at Dallas (10:30 p.m.)

Vets say Barbaro surgery successful

EPSOM DOWNS, PENNSYLVANIA—KENTUCKY Derby winner Barbaro underwent more than five hours of surgery on Sunday to repair three broken bones in his right rear leg and afterward "practically jogged back to the stall," the vet's surgeon said.

"He's doing extremely comfortable in the leg," said Dr. Dean Richardson, who stressed before the marathon procedure that he's never worked on so many catastrophic injuries to one horse.

Barbaro sustained "life-threatening injuries" on Saturday when he broke front shin-and-pastern bones in his right ankle at the start of the Preakness Stakes.

Rogie Ferrer Cup ladies golf tomorrow

MIKE TAN OLALIA V PHILSTAR

All set action in the Rogie Ferrer Cup ladies invitational golf tournament at the executive course of Valley Golf & Country Club in Antipolo City.

The 18-hole Blind Callaway tournament, sponsored by Ms Swiss, for ner national open quota-carded lady golfers tees off from 7 to 8 a.m.

Participants include Fenny Sarauli, Nenid Carreon, Natalie Cruz, Kristine Degollado, Kelly Cruz-Gotauco, Nenet Wahpil, Vicky Sarabia, Luisa Lim, Mila Ng, Jo Gotauco, Sally Tandoc, Rose Cruz, Nina Silva, Sonia Valencia, Ruby Bringas, Alice Reades, Raquel Escobar, Norma Sarcillo, Marilou Ordoñez, Long Ledda, Rene Francisco, Marlene Sergasis, Aileen Lopez, Jenny Lamoid, Minerva Bautista, Audrey Abalos, Shirly Aquino, Ali Lirio, Mary Jane Hernandez, Belen Tampong and Sherry Ibarra.

"Sparse has been good to me," she said. "I just want to share my blessings with my fellow golfers."

WHO'S BRAZILian soccer legend Pele. AFP

Pele: Brazil faces tough odds keeping World Cup

LONDON—PELE BELIEVES IT WILL be harder for Brazil to win a sixth World Cup because it is the favorite.

Despite high expectations and last back-to-back wins over favorites and the 2002 World Cup winner faces the same hurdle, Pele said during a visit to Britain to promote his new autobiography "Pele."

"That's the big problem," he said. "Today the big opponents of Brazil is being the favorite. Always in the World Cup, the favorite doesn't succeed."

The 65-year-old Pele, who won three World Cups for Brazil as a player, listed several teams who were capped up after being tabbed the favorite. He cited the 1982 Brazilian team—led by Zico—and Germany in the final that year—and the Dutch teams of 1974 and 1978.

"If you remember in the last World Cup in Korea and Japan, Italy and France were favorites from Europe and Argentina was the best team from South America, and neither qualified from their groups," he said. AP

Asians hard-pressed to match '02 heroics

SINGAPORE—MEETING THEIR heroic achievements in 2002 is going to be a tough task for Asian teams in Germany with making the second round a more realistic target.

Japan and South Korea joint-hosted the last World Cup and both teams performed magnificently to be-ters of home fans, with South Korea shocking everyone by reaching the semi-finals and Japan reaching the round of 16.

The Koreans performance was the best ever by an Asian team at the World Cup. The previous home be-bagged in South Korea, who reached the last eight in 1966.

But a repeat seems unlikely in both territory despite some foo-ball making progress over the past four years, with growing numbers of players gaining valuable experience by playing their trade in Europe.

At least the region has easier teams than every with Australia-ners part of the Asian family and in their first World Cup finals in 32 years. AFP

SWISS MISS: Martina Hingis does her best "breaststrength" victory. AP

Hingis takes first title since return

ROME—MON TOUT MARTINA Hingis has won her first title since coming out of retirement. It's on to her next big goal: Winning her first French Open.

Hingis beat Dinara Safina 6-2, 7-5 in the Italian Open final on Sunday for her 40th career title, more than four years after her 40th.

"It's a great victory but it doesn't end," Hingis said. "This is just the beginning of tough tournaments coming up—the French Open and Wimbledon."

Up first was the French, the only Grand Slam she hasn't won. It finalist twice in Paris, the 2000 edition more near Sunday.

"Winning this event [in Rome], I know that I can do it again. I feel like I definitely have it in me," Hingis said.

She returned to tennis after more than three years out of the game, and has resurfaced at least the quarterfinals in seven of 10 tournaments. AP

Stellar field in NCA int'l derby

ONLY TOP FINISH REGISTERS OF THE 1937 best Filipino and resources boosters will be featured in the National Caddies Association B Circle International Derby slated May 29, 31 and June 2 at the Bulgaras Mega Clubgolf in Dasmarinas City.

The announcer came from the NCA members who are vying to refine is billed as the country's biggest international bowsliers' championships.

Joe Mikkoli, the former NCA International champion, and Dan Gray head the elite invitational contingent in the derby.

"We know that the NCA International is the best archery tournament in the world and that is why we are coming in fully prepared," said Mikkoli.

Among those spearheading the local challenge are former Derby champs Nestor Alberto Garcia, Jun Pilo, Lito Sia, Ernel Salgado, Gilbi and Jeremy Acosta, Mario Oblenes and Elio Ebreo. Hong Kongers Antonio Lobang, Dave Cashin, Joe and Rudy Angat, Ki Man, Edwin Santos, Gary Tanner, Nestor Abenoja, Lito Dolino, Rudy Salud, William Go, Hong Pando, Claudio Sandico, Antonio Pinto, Iggy Arroyo, Ric Franco, Jun Santiago, Al Dimayuga, Paulo Palomar, Manny and Arturo Santos, Jojo Tanseco, Sandeep Dayanand, Paulo Raja, Tony Tee, Eric Nicolas, Pol Gonzalez, Roger Lee, Tony Lynch, Eddy Sudjai, Eric Go-Lo Hong, Greg Perez, Jhun Pichay, Cito Chuan, Ramon Jimenez and Patrick Ribbons.

WORLD-RENOWNED caddie-brothers Joe Mikkoli (right) and Larry Whitehead (center) head the elite US contingent.

Ochoa triumphs again

NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK—Mexico's Lorena Ochoa jumped past Karrie Webb to the top of the LPGA money list here Sunday, firing a two-over-par 286 under gusty conditions for Celanese Classic by two strokes.

Ochoa finished 34 holes at the rain-shortened event on five-under par 208 after 71s in the rain-interrupted first round and Saturday's second round. Play Friday was swiped out by rain, forcing the event to be trimmed to three rounds.

Ochoa took her second title in 20 starts this year, adding the top prize of $195,000 to the $935,000 she won in a season that has seen five runner-up efforts. AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Bonnie G. Velarde

THIS is the set of "Mga Anino sa Apoloop." The filmmakers want to show Cine Kora-started work on the movie.

Erstwhile finalist dropped from Cinemalaya film fest

By Marinel R. Cruz

"THE COMMITTEE DOES NOT THINK WE can finish our work on time. It should've first shocked if there's movement within the production. I don't think it's fair to any one group did nothing for the past two months," director/filmmaker Nigel Andrea Bertuzzi.

Bertuzzi, co-director of Cinemalaya full-length feature finalist "Mga Anino sa Apoloop," is contesting the film's disqualification to compete in the festival slated on July.

In a letter dated May 15, the Cinemalaya festival committee "terminated" its contract with "festival" writers and project proponent Jon Lucero, "in view of violations committed by Lucero's group."

Festival director Nestor Jardin and competition director Leanne Dudlao-Jodoc signed the disqualification letter.

The letter stated that "festival" disqualification was due to Lucero's failure to complete the requirements in time for the scheduled July. 24 deadline.

"Your two-month delay is unreasonable and unacceptable," the committee heads said. Lucero is asked to completed the requirements on April 27.

The committee also pointed out Lucero's "insistence" to submit the film's final copy—based on the production's timetable—on June. 15, or three weeks beyond the target date of May 30.

In another letter, dated May 16, Fabio said she found it "unacceptable" that the counterpart financial plan Lucero's group presented to the committee "did not specify commitments supporting your production budget beyond the P420,000 seed grant from Cinemalaya."

Bertuzzi argued, "They requested a lot of things from us, and we can abide as comply. Three month delay in our work schedule."

She added, "We (movie unit) the others already started filming and (there's no way for us to catch up. My point is, had they agreed with what we submitted, we would have begun filming on schedule. We're only seeing eight shooting days. We're highly organized."

According to Lucero, four weeks after the original script of "Indios"—which he co-wrote with Ronald Arena—was formally chosen as one of the finalists, Robbie Tan "restricted" him to consult

CONTINUED ON A21

DID YOU KNOW...

NEW YORK— THE ESCAY MARTIN FOUNDATION HAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH the International Organization for Migration to combat sexual exploitation and the trafficking of children. The agreement, signed in Madrid, Spain, will help develop joint efforts between the two organizations. IOM is implementing over 150 counter-trafficking projects around the globe.

"We are committed to ending child exploitation," Martin, 34, said in a statement. "We are certain that this alliance will create a global call to action." AP

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Some TV newscasts pushed back to witching hour

But, are viewers objecting to this rude neglect? Most of them aren't, because they don't think it's their business to do so. Hell, if they don't, who will?

Other viewers feel that their complaints can't make a difference. But past experience has shown that concerted viewer letterwriting can persuade the networks to live of genuine and responsible service to viewers.

So, if you are unhappy about the TV service you're getting, speak up.

While we're at it, we'd also like to complain about another new wrinkle on local TV that's a disservice to viewers. Those chirpy TV shows which hand over breaking to blondes, because they often are overdone due to their commercial load.

So, TV bull can no longer plan their viewing schedules, so they tend to...

Some "transition" shows end past 7 p.m.! And evening programs are announced to start rebroadcasting just as the 9 p.m. but "after the previous program's."

So, viewers just have to wait until the show they want to watch finally comes around. How sensible can the TV networks get?

In this case, very.

'X-Men: The Last Stand'

"X-Men III: The Last Stand" I begins in Philippine cinemas tomorrow, with a total of 75 prints released nationwide.

Joining the cast of the final "X-Men" movie are Kelsey Grammar as Dr. Henry McCoy, also known as Beast, and Eric Dane as Multiple Man.

'Relevance'

The first album-premiere of Gary Valenciano's new "Relevance" CD will be held at SM Megamall's Cinema 6, tomorrow at 6 p.m.

'Poseidon' on top

Warner Bros.' "Poseidon" opened at no. 1 in the Philippines, with a first-day (May 10) gross of P10.1 million, the movie's third biggest opening.

The disaster film stars Josh Lucas and Kurt Russell.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Looks like Nyoy and Nina are tying the knot soon

NYOY VOLANTE AND NINA HAVE SUCH an ideal relationship. That's the way it usually is for guys who are in love, he muses.

"We don't complain exactly when it becomes an issue. We didn't go through the dating and courtship stage. Before we realized it, we were in love," reveals Nyoy.

In spite of their hectic schedules, they make it a point to sneak each other's cuisine? If I have something or typing and she has a gig, we meet up afterwards. But if I'm late, I really watch her show. I love being part of her stuff, even as much as [illegible] hanging with her."

Will wedding bells ring for them anytime soon? Nyoy says, smiling, "Of course that's in the agenda but God has to wait for some."

Sometimes the best things are those we don't plan. Looks like Nyoy and Nina will make the transition from being lovers to a married couple as smoothly as they did from friends to lovers.

Dolly Ann Carvajal

What's up Pete?

I removed Pete Gonzales from the memory of his relationship with Nina Mirasa. "MU" he quipped.

Define that removed sentence, I pushed.

"No commitment. Just entertainment," he explained.

Nina sincere involvement?

"If that means intimacy then, no."

With both their bodies classified under "no dia for," I wonder how long they can keep their chastity belts fastened.

Whadyaday?

John Prats sounded like a little boy as he lamented, "It's been two weeks since Kay (Alonzo) and I last saw each other. When we get together, we will make up for lost time. We've been busy to busy lunch." Never enough time but almost enough love. Whadyaday, Kay?

No pressure

Charlie Pie Picache doesn't feel the pressure to marry her live-in partner of six years, Sarah Teta, just because they have a love child, Simon, 4.

"We'll get there," she says, "but we don't want to have a wedding just for the heck of having one. When we take the plunge we want it to be for keeps. I feel that when you're not married and staying together, you're on your toes. Married couples tend to take each other for granted since hypocrite to the very end—vibes." To be the best or not? Live in or leave? Love is always the answer to that...

Classified ads show

"Nice-boring-Rosario," the cute-classified ads magazine show (BEC 11), hits TV screens on May 28, 9 p.m.

It's a pioneering concept where viewers will find everything they need—a car, house, cellphone, jobs, etc., maybe even a true mate. Hosted by Mickey Ferriols, Ryuko and Mace Reina, the show is directed by no good boy-at Earl Ignacio and produced by my ever-dependable lassie Tellie Ramos of Balcony Productions. Each segment ends in Tech Mo-no, Mikee Bales, Bill Tayo, The Pack, it promises to be a humorous and entertaining mess-ure. To place ads call 422-1111 or 478-2379 or log on to www.nicebuyforsure.com

Sheila Mae's show

Young and pretty Sheila Mae will have a concert on May 28 at Music Comedy Bar (West Ave., QC). She will be joined by her friends Sam Milby and Toni Gonzaga. The one-night show is produced by Mr. Schu of Dec Entertainment. Following the success of Sheila Mae's debut album, Other performers are Jacquelo, Tallkeyz and J-Lee. Call 927-9677 or 929-2115.

Love a la show biz

Angelina de la Cruz is not a bit worried that her kissing scenes with Ryan Agoncillo in "Sinking Sinking Sinking" will cause Judy Ann Santos (Ryan's girl) severe jealousy attacks. "Judy is a professional. She knows that it's purely work," she says. So Ryan and Angelina can do it hot by the sake of art. Hot for the sake of heart.

Just a love teaser

Jason Abalos swears that Angelica Panganiban and him are just a love team. They are not the most secret partners who give their followers false hopes. "I'm not sold for her. We work together well and that's what we want to focus on."

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Martinez

ICTSI buys Indonesian port operator

Says new acquisition has big potential for growth

By Dante L. Luna

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST PORT operator is making good on its promise to expand foreign operations to offset lackluster local activity, announcing yesterday the acquisition of an Indonesian port business.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) said it had purchased a 91-percent stake in PT Makassar Terminal Services (MTS).

The company runs a port in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, which is a relatively small operation compared to ICTSI's other offshore investments.

ICTSI said the purchase, worth $5.6 million, was made through its Singapore-based special purpose holding company, ICTSI Far East Pte Ltd. It also "advanced funds to MTS" to allow the company to pay its outstanding obligations, the statement added.

ICTSI/B3

Stocks close slightly higher

(See main market report on Page B2)

Peso dips to 4-month low of 52.72 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO DIPPED TO A NEW FOUR-MONTH low of 52.72 against the dollar yesterday in step with regional currencies battered by prospects of further interest rate increases in the United States.

It was the peso's lowest closing at the Philippine Dealing System since ending at 52.875:$1 last Jan. 25. Total dollar turnover amounted to $510.3 million.

The local currency traded between an intraday high of 52.68 and a low of 52.86 against the greenback. Although it recovered some losses in intra-day trade, it still ended 7 centavos lower than Friday's closing of 52.65:$1.

The peso, Asia's best performing currency last year when it gained about 8 percent against the dollar, has shed almost 3 percent of its value in the last two weeks alone.

"The peso was hit by emerging-economy demand ahead of the important session (in the third quarter) and the dollar's across-the-board recovery in the region as global investors are becoming more risk-averse," a currency trader at a local commercial bank said.

Global analysts said the turbulence in emerging markets reflected continued worries over US inflation, the Federal Reserve's possible response, how high interest rates would move and how much the US economy would endure.

Other currencies in the region like the Indonesian rupiah, Singapore dollar, Malaysian ringgit, Thai baht, Korean won, Taiwanese dollar and even the Japanese yen succumbed to the dollar's strengthening yesterday.

Not insistent the key issue is whether Indonesia-style 'economic circuits, calculations] have changed enough to shift the long-run direction of markets. One answer would be no, not yet, but clearly the outlook for risk markets will deteriorate further if inflation pressures keep mounting, forcing the Fed to tighten into a slowing economy," said American Express (Alpac) Bank's global economics unit.

In the case of the peso, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the peso continued to be supported by positive fundamentals and was just currently reacting to regional and international market developments.

"The main reason is market expectation that the Fed may increase interest rates again, but if

PESO/B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

BTr cancels auction of 25-year treasury bonds /B3

Crude oil prices rise toward $69/barrel /B6

Speak a boo

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bassid III

AT LAST SOMEBODY IS THERE TO PUT A stop to all the undue advantage that the SM group of mall operator incurs by-reason in the country's 3rd biggest lender—Equitable PCI Bank.

Reports said that Team Middle East, shooting company of the Bermudez family, is asking the court—in the middle of the machinations of the SM group to the EPCIB board for the annual stockholders' meeting today.

Reason: Anonymous conflict of interest!

Well, the SM group owns two other banks, Banco de Oro, ranked 6th largest in the country in terms of resources, and China Bank. The same group nevertheless wants BDO to take over EPCIB—though a "merger of equals."

But since the SM group bought out over the 2.6 percent EPCIB interest of the Ty family, BDO executives led by Henry Sy's daughter Teresa Sy-Coson[1] resigned themselves to executive positions in EPCIB, such as the powerful executive committee and the credit committee.

In other countries, the SM group would never have found the end of it from the regulatory agencies.

Here, of course, nobody in the Bangko Sentral, the regulator of the banking system, or the Securities and Exchange Commission, the policeman of publicly listed companies like EPCIB and BDO, could move a finger.

In some other "jurisdictions" one doing a good job for the SM group.

* * *

As a stockholder of EPCIB, in effect, Team Middle East wants to prevent the SM group from playing its game of "pandalasa."

To me, no matter what happens during the annual stockholders' meeting today, at least the court case registers the resistance of it all.

No other group in this country plays the same game as the SM group of pulling to SM's people in positions where they could ultimately end the hounds of another competing bank like EPCIB.

That's why, from what I gathered, the giant retail chain Mercury Drug, for instance, is no longer among the biggest clients of EPCIB. For one, the SM group is also one of the major profit with shareholders and most for other investment opportunities.

Ansor has moved away from pure management after it unloaded its entire 25-percent stake in ICTSI to ICTSI chair Enrique Razon Jr.

Ansor, together with the Razon group, hold Metro's and Indonesia's 51 percent of ICTSI.

ICTSI and Phelps Dodge Philippines Energy Products Corp., which manufactures wire and cable products, account for the bank's share of investments to Ansor.

Aside from these two ICTSI, Ansor has investments in aviation, business process outsourcing, call center, home deployment, broadband services and real estate.

Ansor owns Seven Seas Resorts & Leisure Inc., which in turn owns the Amanpulo Resort. Amanpulo continues to be recognized annually since its opening in 1994 as one of the best beach resorts in the world.

It also has investments in Chinese International, the call center company spun off from SM Technologies in 2005; in International Quality Manpower Services Inc. (IQMAS), a contractor engaged in deployment of registered nurses to the United States, and in Multi-Media Telephony Inc. (MTI), a provider of a full range of voice, short messaging and high-speed data services.

Its subsidiary, Ansor Land, operates the group's real estate assets such as properties in Cebu and Boracay. It invests as well in investments in the Sorsogon area, as Ayala does. It also owns A Service Inc. Corp., the operator of hangars used by Seven Seas Resorts and Tan Kuan Group (El Nido Resorts).

Ansor's net income in the first quarter dipped 11 percent to P128.68 million from P144.36million in the same quarter last year.

Anscor seen booking gain of ₱2.9B from sale of ICTSI stake

By Elizabeth L. Sandoz

HOLDING FIRM ANSORO CHE JANSCOR expects to book a gain of P2.9 billion in the second quarter from the sale of its entire 15-percent stake in port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI).

In a quarterly financial report filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Ansor said net proceeds from the sale of its stake in ICTSI was worth P5.16 billion.

As a result, Ansor will book income of P2.060 billion from the divestment for the quarter ending June 30.

Ansor said that as a result of this gain, it would declare a special one-time cash dividend of P1.25 a share since it has received the proceeds from the sale on June 6.

The divestment will allow Ansor to share

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   Facility : Copper and Radio
2. **Domestic Data Link from ASTI 3C Node Luzon:** 2175 Chino Roces St., Makati City, **Visayas:** 3F to 7F Plaza Radiovan 27 Park, Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City. **Mindanao:** Davao City/Cagayan de Oro
   To : PCHRRD's 14 Regional Consortia
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4. **Wireless Internet Service, 22 units**

   Note : All proposal is inclusive of taxes, installation and other fees.

Pre-bidding Conference will be on June 08, 2006, 10:00 AM and Opening of Tender will be on June 15, 2006, 2:00 PM at ASTI Conference Room, ASTI Bldg., UP Technopark Complex, C.P. Garcia Avenue, UP Campus Diliman, Quezon City. Bidding Documents may be obtained from ASTI or call Ms. Mark Casar and Ms. Miller Pedro at Tel. Nos. 426-9766, 426-7423, and 426-9767 for more details.

In case of failure of biddings due to ineligible or non-compliant of participating and responsive bidders, re-bidding shall automatically be scheduled one week after the announcement of failed bid.

(Sgd.) JOSE ERIC S. MAGLANQUE
BAC Chairman

ITB - May 23, 2006

Bidding for N. Harbor backed

FORMER CENTRAL Bank Governor Rafael Buenaventura Buhay Lotilla has thrown his support behind the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (PCCI) call for the government to privatize the Manila North Harbor through a public bidding.

PCCI had endorsed a letter to the Philippine Ports Authority recommending that the privatization of Terminal 1 to 3 be done in as much as possible due to the need for transparency and competitive procedures.

PCCI also recommended for PPA to continue operating Terminal 3, while undertaking a thorough review of the need to modernize its operations for further privatization efforts.

PCCI said port users called on the PPA to allow the Manila Harbour Center Port Inc. and Asian Terminals Inc. to operate in competition with Terminals 1 and 2.

"We laud the board of the PCCI on the position paper of North Harbor," Lotilla said in a statement.

DISCLOSURES

MACROPORT Phils., Inc. has disclosed the repurchase of 5,000 common shares at P0.80 per share on May 22.

* * *

PETRON Corp. has declared a cash dividend of P0.10 per share payable on June 29 for stockholders of record as of June 2.

* * *

ELECTRONIC Z. Ferreros, Bernardino F. Velasco Jr., Henry De Sy., Ma. Paz V. Lopez and Jose Miguel Velasco have been elected as directors of **Republic Glass Holdings Corp.** Meanwhile, Bienvenido A. Tan Jr., Cornelio S. De La Paz, Federico F. Puno and Rolando S. Reyes were elected as independent directors. **Compiled by Edu Punay, PDI Research**

CURRENCIES

May 22, 2006	Cash	Cash Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.018315	1.000000	0.018315
Japan	Yen	0.002113	0.008853	0.471
United Kingdom	Pound	0.010466	0.571360	0.026731
Hongkong	Dollar	0.014061	0.768044	0.7681
Switzerland	Franc	0.014397	0.786196	0.7862
Canada	Dollar	0.016135	0.881100	0.8811
Singapore	Dollar	0.011955	0.652971	0.6530
Australia	Dollar	0.013888	0.758413	0.7584
Denmark	Krone	0.003452	0.188523	0.1885
Norway	Krone	0.002952	0.161232	0.1612
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.004881	0.266574	0.2666
Sweden	Krona	0.002402	0.131200	0.1312
Thailand	Baht	0.000465	0.025400	0.0254
Euro	Euro	0.022558	1.231900	1.2319
Taiwan	Dollar	0.000564	0.030800	0.0308
Denmark	Krone	0.003178	0.173597	0.1736
Norway	Krone	0.002717	0.148413	0.1484
Sweden	Krona	0.002211	0.120762	0.1208
Switzerland	Franc	0.013252	0.723800	0.7238
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.004822	0.263400	0.2634
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.004492	0.245400	0.2454
New Zealand	Dollar	0.012815	0.700000	0.7000
South Korea	Won	0.000018	0.000983	0.0010
Qatar	Riyal	0.005027	0.274600	0.2746
Taiwan	Dollar	0.000564	0.030800	0.0308

BTr cancels auction of 25-year treasury bonds

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY has canceled today's auction of 25-year treasury bonds on suspicion that the market would try to jack up interest rates for "abused" buyers.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government preferred to stay out of the market than be hammered to sell bonds at a high interest.

The government's liquidity position is still very healthy, anyway, and so it does not have to be forced to immediately raise cash, he said.

The government was supposed to borrow P1.5 billion through the auction of 25-year bonds today.

The cancellation of today's auction followed the decision of the BTr to reject all bids for 10-year bonds last week, when it was supposed to raise P5.5 billion.

The BTr has rejected bids raised in the auction last week, the interest rate for the four-year bonds would have risen to 8.48 percent, or 1.43 percentage points higher than the 7 percent recorded during its last auction on April 25.

The market's move to seek higher interest rates amid perception that yields on government securities were already too low, resulting in a negative real interest rate.

National Treasurer says the government can afford to stay out of market for now

Ideally, interest rates on government securities should be higher than the inflation rate to make sure the yields from the investment instrument were not offset by the increase in consumer prices.

He said the scheduled auction for T-bills and bonds for next week would push through for now, but added that the Treasury would decide on "a per week basis."

"We don't need the cash, as the government would stay out of the market until it becomes settled," Cruz added.

Earlier, the BTr announced that it would issue 35.84.5 billion worth of government securities in the third quarter of the year to finance the government's expenditure requirements.

But Cruz said the schedule would remain flexible.

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3 months	3.13%	0.38%	1.38%	3.69%
6 months	3.25%	0.38%	1.44%	3.75%
12 months	3.38%	0.44%	1.56%	3.88%

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Stocks close slightly higher

Transcription failed

sharply but weak to where it was below the mile.

The composite index ended up 1.86 points at 2,337.98 after trading between 2,332.41 and 2,360.56, as volume of 6.39 billion shares worth P1.48 billion.

Losers outnumbered gainers 77 to 25, while 29 stocks were unchanged.

The broader all-shares index gained 1.26 points to 1,494.12.

"It is tempting for bargain hunters to come out at this point. But we don't expect buying to turn aggressive right away," said analyst Cecilio of First Grade Holdings Inc.

The prospect of further increases in US interest rates have prompted foreign fund managers to realign their portfolios in favor of those debt-denominated assets, consequently weighing on the peso and prompting the local central bank to intervene in the foreign currency market occasionally.

Dealers said this has also led to worries that local interest rates would eventually rise, in turn dampening the market investment enhancement growth.

PLDT was top-traded, ending at P2,830. Bond Globe Telecom fell P6 to P9.95, creating gains in land trade outlets.

ICTSI advanced 25 centavos to P3.50 after it announced that it had purchased 26 percent of Australian port operator PF Makassar Terminal Services. (See story on page B-2.)

Conglomerate Aboitiz Corp. gained P5 to P425 on bargain hunting, while rival Ayala Land ended nearly at P15.50.

Another of its rivals, Bank of the Philippine Islands, was down 1 peso to P62.50.

San Miguel A shares were steady at P63.50 while B-shares inched 50 centavos higher at P61.

AFP

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Distinguished Medical Scientist and Public Servant
Consultant, World Health Organization / Head, Population Program, Department of Health

GABRIEL I. NABOR

April 25, 1962 – May 20, 2006

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heaven..."
Ecclesiastes 3:11

In Loving Memory
on the Fifteenth Death Anniversary of
GORGONIA MEDINA VITUG

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no fear. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

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People, Events & Products

Moviegoers 'lite-n up' with new Selecta Lite

ELIMINATING HAS ALWAYS meant refreshing desserts and sweet treats – and now, it's also the time to enjoy a cool, health-friendly snack. Moviegoers got a taste of the new Selecta Lite ice cream recently, when Selecta let tonight the sinsiphones now confection to malls and cinemas around metro Manila.

Selecta Lite is the first brand to locally introduce "lite" ice cream in the three all-time favorite flavors: Double Dutch, Cookies and Cream, and Very Rocky Road. It has the rich ice cream flavor you've always loved, but it's 94 percent fat-free and with 33 percent less sugar. Each deliciously serving contains only 180 calories, so even fitness buffs can indulge without the guilt.

The full-flavored treat was certainly a hit among movie somehow relax got to be among the first to try it. Hundreds lined up at Greenbelt 3, Glorietta 4, Alabang Town Center, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-la and Eastwood City cinemas for the free scoops of lite-n low ice cream which came with their favorite movie tickets.

The new dessert sensation earned enthusiastic approval from health buffs, ice cream lovers, kids and adults alike. "It still has that rich flavor I love, but now it's much healthier."

With its delightful taste and fitness-friendly ingredients, Selecta Lite can be a up all your family faves, dessert indulgences, and special occasions. Watch out for this exciting new treat, coming your way this summer!

'SEEING THRU COLOR' RIBBON CUTTING
Shown in the 'Seeing Thru Color' Ribbon-cutting at the exhibit opening of Anna Bautista-de Chua at the Ayala Gallery, 6th level, SM Megamall, L to r: photo are Fiona with her art students and works; 1st row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua; Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; 2nd row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; 3rd row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; 4th row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; 5th row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. Victoria Ocampo; 6th row, left Ms. Bautista-de Chua's daughter Ms. Fiona Bautista; and Ms. Ayala Gallery Director Ma. 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Think tank paints rosy picture for RP business

Economist cites improvements in tax administration, LGU practices

By Roland N. Dantago

THE BUSINESS SECTOR MAY EXPECT A rosy future as opportunities appear to abound following the improvement in the country's fiscal picture, as well as efforts to streamline bureaucracies and the creation of good local government practices, according to a former chief economist.

Cielito F. Habito, who held the position during the Ramos administration, said that while economic indicators—such as growth of production, the performance of the peso against other currencies, and volume of exports and imports—have shown improvement although these were not as good as those of strong performers.

Habito, who heads the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development, was speaking at the opening of the two-day 27th National Convention of Management held at the Manila Hotel.

Citing data from the National Statistics Office, Habito said that in 2005 the gross domestic product increased by 5.7 percent, exports grew by 2.1 percent, and imports increased by 1.9 percent.

Also, the peso—which is catching up with other currencies with the help of a "dramatic downfall" in imports, weakening of the American dollar, the increased investment in remittances and a global excess supply of money—is seen to remain strong throughout the year at an average of 55.2:1 and 55.8:1 against the dollar, ACERD said.

While the numbers posed the question of a glass of water either being half empty or half full, the data still provided a firm base for businesses to go on, Habito said.

He said opportunities exist from the government's improved tax administration capability by the expansion of the value-added tax's coverage as well as to rate increases, good practices among local government units, as well as improved collaboration between the national government and LGUs, and working partnerships in social services between governments, non-government and other agencies.

Habito said that while indicators that matter most to people were on the downside—which translates to continued poverty for a significant number of Filipinos—there were still more who are not considered poor and who have the means to help those who are so.

Habito said that it is not only a case of how Filipino families is poor, but this also means that those out of loop are not, Habito said.

BSP not willing to waive ₱193-M Prudential fine

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS IS UNwilling to waive a ₱193-million monetary penalty slapped on Prudential Bank, which has been absorbed by the bank of the Philippine Islands.

According to BSP monetary policy to monitor discussions at the Monetary Board, the banking regulator is keen on ensuring after the liabilities of any bank taken over by another bank.

The penalty on Prudential Bank, which used to be owned by the Sarmo family until BPI acquired the controlling stake, was "reserve-related," the BSP source said.

In August last year, BPI bought about ₱13 percent of the Sarmo family's Prudential Bank through block purchases at the PSE, worth ₱5.6 billion, corresponding some 7.52 billion shares priced at ₱7.46.94 per share.

Earlier the rules on Prudential Bank were amended and rules covered bank with about P60 billion to secure, a network of 147 branches and 32 automatic teller machines nationwide.

The BSP earlier warned the firm imposed on banks that were acquired by other banks to encourage mergers in the banking system.

But recently, responding to Prudential's—push in an effort granted by BSO for its purchase of the local branch network of the United Overseas Bank of the Philippines...are now being deliberated at length during BB meetings, the sources said.

Mango growers expect long, hard haul to the top

By Ma. Elena Labrusa
PDI Project Writer

KOLO CITY—GROW AND EAT more mangoes.

This was the appeal of more than a hundred mango growers who gathered here from May 17 to 20 for the 6th National Mango Congress.

Mangoes in the Philippines are sold to us by one of the best in the world and taste like no other. Even the processed forms—dried slivers and strips, chunks, juices and purees—are superb. The country ranks as one of the top 10 suppliers of mangoes in the world today.

But mangoes, even if they are in season, are beyond the reach of many Filipinos.

Rodel Maghirang of the Bureau of Plant Industry cast of the congress spotlight, said mangoes have "processing potential" among other options for the seasonal fruit.

Mango is the fourth among the top high value crops in the country after bananas, pineapple and coffee.

In 2005, mango production is valued at P 14.75 billion. Unlike banana production which posted 3.6 percent last year, mangoes have a modest growth of 1.95 percent.

The country has 260,000 hectares planted to mangoes, up from only 87,000 hectares in 1996. But local mango farm production has been decreasing and dipping, a trend that worries mango watchers because global markets are expanding and other mango-growing countries are catching up.

Go West

As a high value crop, mangoes do not grow on trees without inputs like fertilizer. Grower including sprays, pest control and post harvest facilities.

Add to these is the factor of middlemen-wholesalers and retailers or transporters.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), it is cheaper to procure mangoes in Luzon than anywhere else in the country.

The cost of production in Luzon is only P3 to 5 a kilo. But in the Visayas and Mindanao, it is P6 to P10 and P8 to P13 a kilo respectively.

The farmgate price of mangoes is P13 a kilo, but when it reaches retailers and supermarkets, it is P30 to P40 a kilo.

ACCORDING to producers, mango has to "go West," where markets are expanding. At present, the country produces close to 1 million metric tons of mangoes a year. But only exports only reach 4 to 5 percent of gross production.

Mango has to "go West," Maghirang said. "Mango markets are expanding in the United States and European Union countries."

The U.S. market is growing but, with 40 percent demand increase and the Philippine mangoes, which are grown all year round, can fill in the demand during lean season of congress in Mexico, the major supplier of mangoes to the US.

The Dominican mangoes, however, are allowed in the US after the governor has been certified free of mango pulp and seed weevil, which are quarantine pests in the US.

Besides the top supplier of mangoes in last ups. Prospects are good in Europe, Japan and the Philippines can improve transportation and storage.

Exotic

In Europe, mango is a "specialty," it not exotic, fruit.

The Philippines is the largest supplier of mangoes to Japan, which is also the biggest importer of mangoes in Asia. But Mexico, Thailand and Australia also supply to Japan, and they cross compete in the Philippines.

Overall, the Philippines ranks second to Mexico in the top exporter of fresh mangoes in the world. But the Philippines' share of the market is only 9 percent, while Mexico has 31.8 percent.

Maghirang said the mango seed crop envisions that the Philippines may be the leading supplier of mangoes in the world by 2020.

Meanwhile, it has to overcome some impediments, like the deterioration of backyard farms that may be a problem in quality control, the erratic and relatively low yield, short shelf life, and high freight cost, among others.

The country also has to worry about strong competition from imported fruits, trade protectionism and unfair demands during off seasons.

Gov't to promote micro insurance for low earners

THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING A blueprint for the proposed "micro insurance" program, under which it intends to help low-income consumers and promote the so-called "C" and "D" markets and increase insurance awareness among Filipinos.

Evangeline Bautista, head of the Insurance Commission, said the blueprint is expected to be completed before the end of the year. She expects the launching of the micro insurance program by early 2007.

Bautista stressed the need to increase public awareness of the importance of being insured, noting that only 12% 13 percent of the country's population are currently covered by insurance.

The commission intends to increase the figure to 20 percent by the end of 2007, and to 40 percent by 2010, she said.

Bautista said one strategy to combat insurance products to low-income earners would be tapping the services of cooperatives, which could distribute insurance products to its members. Cooperatives could be also allowed to promote insurance to their members, she said.

Quoting figures from the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Bautista said there are 71,000 cooperatives in the country and 29,000 of those are actively operating and could help in the marketing of insurance products in the countryside. Aladdin T. Rivas

Firms may no longer get to enjoy tax perks

By Michaelle V. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT IS POISED to lift the income tax holiday (ITH) granted to priority businesses, saying that the fiscal incentive does not necessarily help the country's competitiveness in the long term, while it only tends to retain huge foreign revenues.

The Senate committee on ways and means chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto, yesterday expressed its intention to finish the proposal to revamp the ITH to the floor in session before adjournment, which is currently under deliberation at the upper chamber.

The Senate committee's move this week heeds lawsuits following the issuance of the stock certificate issued by the Department of Finance (DOF) ordering that ITH, compared with other fiscal incentives, has the least influence on the entry of investments in the country.

The DOF said that the ITH panel on businesses had been an important way of enticing investments. It added it would even push for its immediate removal in the fiscal incentives rationalization plan.

Data from the DOF showed that the government lost P27.14 billion in potential tax revenues in 2004, more due to the ITH given out to firms registered with the Board of Investments.

BOI is registered. Some are those belonging to the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP), a list of priority industries and are therefore granted various fiscal incentives.

Despite the huge foregone revenue from the ITH, Recto said, incentives made were actually influenced by other factors, such as the country's huge domestic market. He concluded therefore that there was a high correlation ratio in the granting of ITH to businesses.

He told fiscal incentives in the form of "net operating loss carryover" (NOLCO) and "accelerated depreciation" were better in terms of attracting more investments.

With rules, firms that post a loss in a given year are allowed to deduct the amount of loss in its tax liabilities in the following year. With "accelerated depreciation," firms may deduct the amount of depreciation of its capital equipment earlier than its true or actual depreciation.

Recto added that the quality of investments attracted by ITH is of poorer quality than those enjoyed through "perks" and "accelerated depreciation."

Companies that receive because of ITH are usually the ones that may only temporarily and leave once the ITH is lifted, he said. Those that invest because of NOLCO and accelerated depreciation will stay in the country for the long term, he added.

The Department of Trade and Industry, head agency of the BOI admits to modest with investment incentives, and is now supporting the proposal to lift the ITH.

SMC, Ayala Land, SM seek direct power link

By Abigail L. Ho

SAN MIGUEL CORP., AYALA LAND, SM Prime Holdings, Inc. and Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp. have filed applications to be directly connected to the National Grid Corp.

According to the state firm's marketing and commercial services department, the 40 industrial and commercial power users that applied for direct connection had an estimated requirement of 1,140 megawatts (MW).

The demand of San Miguel alone was placed at 519.000 MW for its food processing plant in Mandaue City, Cebu, plus another 1,000 MW for its recycling plant in Mindanao.

Ayala Land is seeking 15,000 kW for its Cagayan Technopark development, while SM requires a total of 5,500 kW for its malls in Bacolod, Iloilo and Davao City.

Of the 40 applicants for direct power connection, Meralco said 19 were located in Luzon, eight were based in the Visayas, and 13 were from Mindanao.

Three applicants come from various sectors and industries, including mining, electronics, steel, semiconductor, food manufacturing. There were also applicants that operate economic zones, industrial estates and universities. Some applicants host government offices.

Three companies wanted direct connection to ensure the reliability of the supply of electricity. They currently get their electricity supply from either private electricity distribution utilities or local electric cooperatives.

Other commercial and industrial facility owners that also want to be directly connected to Napocor include the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone in Baguio City and Amnon Corp. in Bataan, both with a demand of 30,000 kW; Samsung Electro Mechanics in Calamba, Laguna, with 30,000 kW; Olivarez Actinco Mining Corp. in Davao Oriental with 21,000 kW; and Gree Minerals Inc. and Platinum Metals Corp., both located in Mindanao and with a requirement of 10,000 kW each.

In a related development, Napocor energized its new transmission line yesterday, including Global Business International Inc. in Subic, Zbales City; the Philippine National Oil Co. Energy Development Corp.'s Bacman II Geothermal and Philippine Facilities; People's Energy Services Inc. in Calaca; Luzon Industrial Development Estate Management Corp. in Isabel, Leyte; Romanco Southwestern Corp. in Romanco, Negros City; and Global Energy Inc. in Lobo, Canaman Norte.

Napocor said these new customers raised in an additional ₱270 million for the state firm last year.

ICTSI buys Indonesian port operator

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According to ICTSI, Makassar is the principal port in Eastern Indonesia. Last year, it imported cargo throughput of 209,513 containers or TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

ICTSI considers Makassar as a young container port with a big potential for growth," ICTSI said. "This company looks forward to practicipating in this growth in Indonesia."

MTI has a cooperation agreement with PT Pelabuhan Indonesia IV for the procurement, installation and operation of container handling and unloading equipment under a seven-year sharing scheme at the Makassar New Container Terminal.

ICTSI Singaporean unit purchased the shares sold by the Royal Interest & Equipment Pte Ltd. and PT Dalyanto Nusantara Mandiri.

"The latter company, an Indonesian shipping line, retained 5 percent of its holdings in [MTI]," the statement said.

Besides, ICTSI chair and president Enrique K. Razon Jr. said that lower trading volumes between local businesses and foreign companies were hurting ICTSI's revenues, giving the management fresh impetus to diversify operations into new markets.

He said that customers volumes for inbound and outbound goods have been noticeably lower from its 2004 profits, "dampened by growing reliance from its established container operations, further expansion, and increased operating leverage across the group."

Despite the increasing importance of its foreign operations, however, ICTSI's fiscally International Container Terminal (MICT) remained its top business source.

Peso dips . . .

From page B1

you look at the fundamentals, they have remained essentially the same," Tesangco said.

He cited the country's sustained balance-of-payments surplus for this year, the growth in the domestic economy, the better-than-expected performance by the government and a broadening export earnings.

As of the last Monetary Board meeting early this month, Tesangco said the expectation was that the US Fed would raise its core eight rates by another quarter-percentage point before year-end.

"The market is reacting there will be another move. Maybe. Of course, the market can't be 100 percent sure. Now we'll see what's going to happen and wait for further signals," Tesangco said.

Asked and whether the US Fed would raise its rate again next month, Tesangco said "but even if it was expecting a pause over the summer

BUSINESS

Crude oil prices rise toward $69/barrel

Market traders point to concerns about Iran, Nigeria

SINGAPORE—CRUDE OIL prices yesterday rebounded slightly from the previous session's decline, as traders bought contracts amid some expectation the market may have bottomed out as well as persistent concerns about oil supplies from Iran and Nigeria.

Light, sweet crude for June delivery, which expires later Monday, rose 14 cents to $68.09 a barrel in Asian electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange, midmorning in Singapore.

The contract on Friday fell 92 cents to settle at $68.53 a barrel. The July contract rose 6 cents to $69.20 a barrel.

Gasoline futures gained 0.35 cent to $2.04 a gallon (3.8 liters) while heating oil futures added 1.09 cents to $1.9318 a gallon. Natural gas prices advanced 3.3 cents to $6.835 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Oil prices fell in the previous session by a general sell-off in the commodities market, sparked by a rise in the US dollar after several days of decline, and worries over rising US inflation.

"The market may be becoming one," said Victor Shum, energy analyst with Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

"At least in some quarters of the market, there's a feeling that the downward price correction over the last week to below $70 provides a buying opportunity," he said.

Shum added that the oil market continued to show more upside than downside potential, based on geopolitical worries.

"Because of the overall tightness in refining capacity and crude oil production capacity worldwide, just one actual or perceived event could cause a spike in prices," he said.

"Traders have been concerned about how the Iran's standoff with Iran over the Islamic republic's nuclear ambitions will affect that nation's oil exports, as well as supply disruptions in Nigeria and the Gulf of Mexico during hurricane season.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Sunday the US has not offered a guarantee against attacking or undermining Iran's hard-line government in exchange for having Tehran curtail its nuclear program.

"Iran is a troublemaker in the international system, a central banker of terrorism. Investors, as currency are not on the table," Rice said.

The European Union said last week it would propose economic and political incentives to persuade Iran to halt its plans for enriching uranium.

While Iranian officials insisted they are only seeking nuclear power, the US and other nations fear Iran is working toward developing weapons. AP

Wal-Mart sells Korea outlets for $882M

SEOUL—WAL-MART STORES Inc. has agreed to the sale of its South Korean outlets to local retailer Shinsegae Co. for $882 million, making it the second global retailer to exit the country in a month.

Both companies said in a statement on Monday they had agreed to sell Wal-Mart's 16 stores to Shinsegae, a unit of parent-maker in the US company's 16 domestic outlets for $315 billion won.

Shinsegae will operate the stores under its E-Mart retail store brand.

French retail giant Carrefour said in late April it is to sell its Korean stores to a local fashion retailer E-Land Ltd. in a $1.03 billion deal to focus on China.

Carrefour sold out of the country's discount store market so that it could concentrate resources on China's $240 billion retail industry, Asia's largest retail market after Japan.

"We will continue to focus our efforts where we can have the greatest impact on our group's strategy, it became increasingly clear that in South Korea's current environment it would be difficult for us to reach the scale we desired," Mike Duke, vice chair of Wal-Mart, said in a statement.

Shinsegae is South Korea's biggest discount store chain operator with 70 E-Mart stores nationwide. It lost out in the bid for Carrefour's South Korean stores.

Analysts say the purchase will give Shinsegae a firm lead over its rivals. Shinsegae competes with Lotte Shopping Co. and Britain's Tesco Plc. in the discount store market in South Korea, Asia's fourth largest economy. Reuters

COMBO of two file pictures shows a logo of Euronext in Sept. 22, 2000, in front of the Palais Brongniart in Paris during a ceremony (top) and signs inside the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on March 8, 2006, on the first day of trading of the NYSE Group Inc. in New York (bottom). AFP

NYSE unveils $21-B plan to merge with Euronext

PARIS—THE NEW YORK STOCK EXchange unveiled a share and cash bid for Euronext on Monday, resurrecting a proposed rival offer from Deutsche Boerse just a day before a meeting where Euronext shareholders will decide on the future of the five-country European exchange.

The proposed alliance would create a transatlantic exchange giant with a market capitalization of $11 billion.

NYSE Group Inc. said it sees cost and revenue synergies of $375 million, with group headquarters in New York.

Euronext said in a statement, its board would meet on Monday afternoon to consider the two proposals.

Under the NYSE plan, NYSE Group Chief Executive John Thain would become the new world's largest exchange, with Euronext chief Jan-Michiel Hessels becoming its president.

Euronext Chief Executive Jean-Francois Theodore would become deputy chief executive officer.

Under terms of the proposal, each share of NYSE Group will be converted into one share of common stock of the combined company, which will be renamed NYSE Euronext, NYSE said in a statement.

Holders of Euronext ordinary shares will be offered the right to exchange each of their shares for 0.98 shares of NYSE Euronext stock and 11.22 euros ($27.101) in cash.

The transaction is based on a fixed ratio of 1.4 shares of the combined company for each Euronext ordinary share, with 80 percent of the aggregate consideration paid in cash.

The operator of the Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels and Lisbon bourses, and of London's Euronext.liffe derivatives exchange, had on Friday rebuffed a Deutsche Boerse offer as "nothing new."

The Frankfurt-based operator said its German rival have been in talks for months but these discussions have stumbled on several issues such as the business model of the merged entity and the neutrality of its headquarters. Reuters

Tokyo up, but Asia still wary about inflation

SINGAPORE—JAPANESE STOCKS INCHED higher on Monday, with blue-chip shares reaching gains in US stocks, but US inflation worries continued to weigh on the broader Asian market.

Japan's Nikkei share average, which has fallen for two straight weeks, was up around 0.5 percent. In contrast, shares elsewhere in Asia measured by MSCI were down about 0.6 percent.

Eamonn Aw, manager at Ikhir Information and investment department in Japan, said bargain hunters nibbled the Tokyo market.

"Investors are buying a slew of undervalued issues, after seeing the Nikkei's resilience after falling briefly below 16,000," he said.

The Nikkei hit a new month closing low of 15,987.16 last Thursday, having lost a total 1,294 points since May 8.

Shares were also up a touch in Taiwan and Singapore, but down approaching 1 percent in Seoul, Hong Kong and Australia.

US stocks rose on Friday, ending a volatile week on gains in tech firms after a slide in shares of some commodity-related stocks. The Standing Composite Index rose 0.42 percent, while the Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.14 percent.

This week will be "interesting because we're really now get most of the earnings season behind us," said Stock Gordon, head of equities at Shinhan Global Fund S. Co. in the United States. "We make the macroeconomic factors suggest results will be somewhat positive and bearing from companies as much."

Traders said the dollar was firm as investors bought the currency back, having sold it heavily over the past couple of weeks, when it hit an eight-month low against the yen and a four-year low against the euro.

"The dollar is likely to be firm this week as investors take a couple from the past weeks' rapid selling and since there positions," said a dealer at a Japanese bank.

"Market focus is returning to the future course of US interest rates. And whether the dollar bounces back will depend on whether we see strong data," he said.

The United States is due to report housing, consumer sentiment and revised first-quarter GDP growth figures this week.

Gold lost some appeal as a rising dollar made the precious metal more expensive to other currencies.

Spot gold hit a high of $661.25 an ounce before retreating to $653.70, down from $669.20/660.00 late in the US market.

Gold fell to a three-week low of $651 on Friday.

Oil prices steadied after shedding almost 5 percent last week as investors, spooked by inflation concerns, lurked to pastime on a broad range of commodities.

Japanese government bond prices rose, tracking a short-covering rally in longer-dated US Treasuries and European bonds. The yield on the benchmark 10-year bond sank to a three-week low, erasing a rise which had taken it to nearly a seven-year high earlier in the month. Reuters

Sumitomo Metal plans refinery expansion

SHANGHAI—SUMITOMO METAL Mining Co. Ltd. plans to expand annual capacity at its Hihlsima nickel refinery in Japan by 13,000 tons by the end of the decade to accommodate increased output from a Philippine project, an executive said.

The Coral Bay nickel project, which began production a year ago, will double output in fully fed Asia's growing demand for nickel, which is used in stainless steel, nuclear plants and oil rigs.

Sumitomo's current capacity for nickel matte is 30,000 metric tons nickel is 36,000 tons a annum.

"The Coral Bay expansion will probably start up by 2009, so we see the Hihlsima expansion by 2010," Kanehiro said in a conference on matters steel organized by trade publication Metal Bulletin.

Sumitomo said earlier it would invest $200 million to build a second plant at the Coral Bay nickel refinery in the Philippines, doubling output to 20,000 tons a year. The new plant, on the southern island of Palawan, is due to start up in April 2009.

Rio Tinto Nickel Mining Corp., with 60 percent, is the Philippine partner in the project. Traders in the new plant may be offered.

Coral Bay Nickel started commercial production of nickel and cobalt in April 2005. Reuters

EADS grows 57% in Asia

EUROPEAN AERONAUTIC DEfense and Space Company (EADS, a global leader in aerospace, defense and related services, has recorded dramatic growth in its operations in the Asia Pacific region.

In 2005, EADS generated a 57-percent increase in revenues versus 2004 figures. EADS generated E7.7 billion (23 percent of global group revenues) in Asia Pacific compared to revenues of E4.9 billion (15.5 percent of global) in 2004.

The company expects that 20 percent of its overall revenues will come from Asia Pacific by 2015. The overall revenues of EADS in 2005 grew by 8 percent to E34.3 billion.

In 2005, the Asia Pacific region accounted for E2.2 billion (43 percent) of the EADS order intake. The order intake of the group in new than doubled to E9.6 billion over the previous year.

"EADS has a long track record of cooperation with Asian companies, which are becoming major players in the world of aerospace, defense and security", said Jean-Paul Gut, chief operating officer for marketing, strategy and global development of EADS.

KDDI Corp's new Walkman-brand music phone (right) and water and impact-resistant phone are displayed at an unveiling in Tokyo. KDDI, Japan's second-largest telco, said it plans to launch the music phone, developed by Sony Ericsson, in Japan in June for about 20,000 yen ($179). AFP

Walkman phones launched in Japan

TOKYO—JAPANESE MOBILEphone operator KDDI Corp. said on Monday it will launch a Walkman brand music phone made by Sony Ericsson in Japan in June, its latest move to attract users in an industry facing tougher competition, sending its shares higher.

Competition in Japan's $79 billion cell phone industry, led by NTT DoCoMo Inc., is set to heat up as a new regulation this autumn makes it easier for customers to switch services by letting them keep their existing phone numbers, prompting operators to enhance their glamour and services.

NTT DoCoMo also announced this month that it would launch a music download service later this year.

KDDI, whose main mobile phone brand, au, has enjoyed strong demand in recent years thanks to its innovative music download service, said the phone, W43S, would sell for about 20,000 yen ($179) and have 1 gigabyte of music-dedicated memory, allowing it to store up to 400 songs.

The phone, developed by Sony Ericsson, a mobile phone joint venture between Japan's Sony Corp. and Sweden's Ericsson , would also have a playback time of about 30 hours.

"More than 3.5 million Walkman phones have sold worldwide since their launch last August. Music phones virtually mean Walkman phones," Sony Ericsson Corporate Vice President Hirokazu Ishisaka told a news conference.

"They will finally come to Japan." Besides the Walkman phone, KDDI unveiled six other new models for the summer sales season, made by Casio Computer Co. Ltd., Toshiba Corp., Sanyo Electric Co. Ltd., Hitachi Ltd. and Kyocera Corp..

"Mobile number portability will be under way by November and users will become more choosy in picking their favorite phones," said Tohru Kawai, general manager of KDDI's au business sector.

The news comes on the heels of KDDI's announcement last week that Japan's second-largest telecom operator had agreed with Google Inc., the world's most popular Web search provider, to offer Google's search engine on its cell phones. Reuters

POWER up your brain /C3

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chuin Bascal-Fermares

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY ZEST • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Life is about losses and gains

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT IT. life is all about losing and gaining, giving and taking—a constant shock and balancer of losing and not losing.

Here is a mechanism of some of the day-to-day life situations where this natural law applies.

Losing –

Weight. It seems easily-to-some; and with great effort to others. You know you need to lose it when pants, having difficulty zipping in your pants or skirt. Tips to remember:

- Before starting a diet, consult your physician. If your doctor doesn't understand your needs, see a nutritionist.
- Beware of diet fads. They may rob you of major nutrients.
- It's okay to leave our plan of action because it stimulates gastric juices and helps in proper digestion.
- Remember that when you're dieting, the body burns down calories due to decreased food intake. This is the body's natural response. Understand that diets never work unless accompanied by exercise. Find a gym (later weekly or walk briskly for 30 minutes daily.
- Diet failures include:
  - **Drinks** doesn't mean listening.
  - Grapefruit makes you lose weight.
  - Fruits do not have calories.
  - High-protein foods do not have calories.
  - Drink is not an interesting or protein.
- Do not watch television while having your meals. You tend to eat more.

Focus. The inability to concentrate and pinpoint the issues concerns. When this is encouraged, high negative stress levels are indicated. Triggers include: lack of sound sleep, unreliable blood-sugar levels, anxiety, depression, stress, menopause, premenstrual disorders, alkaline debris disorder (ADD).

Stress remedies.

- Increase the use...include a cup of peppermint, lemon, rosemary or grape fruit oil.
- Aromatherapy—lavender or rose essence can ease symptoms.
- Nutrition—ginger, biotin. Scrap. In daily state, 7.5-12.5 mg daily: increase intake of beans, nuts, lentils, fish, sweet potato.
- Meditation—stand rest is a need in order to recharge it (15-20 minutes of meditation regularly is the amazing and before retiring is recommended).
- Counseling—it still not hard to see a therapist should your anxiety levels increase.

There are psychological ways to solve a problem.

Heart. To lose the one we love to, worse, the will to live can happen to many of us at some point in our lives. Knowing that you have vitality, history of depression can be overcome, than Hollow, MD, PhD, associate professor of psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor, says, "There is well-documented evidence that, like cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure, major depression has a genetic development."

But even if you can't choose your parents, you can still do something about your propensity for depression. The first would be to seek counseling.

There is a physical price even for mild sadness. Just one to two days can weaken your immune system, make you appear 20 years older, decrease muscle tone and make your muscles sag.

- To counter that, you must acknowledge the bad feeling. Let them flow into and through you and out of your system.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Have busy and active. Also, exercise!
- Seek professional help or find supportive friends/family.
- Stay away from alcohol/drugs.
- Keep your world each out of touch—the outdoors is to advise.
- Be a firm believer—or happy for a few hours until you cross the street then look to such. Good vibes remember: your spotlight!

Reference: Sue Draper, for Inbox, "Prevention Magazine, "Natural Health For Women" by Beth Howard.

Gaining

- When you are able to meet your health goals, then you are gaining control over your cravings, whims and caprices.
- You gain in mind power when your mind is done and anchored.
- Your esteem on how good and how far life is heightened when you know you have a purpose for living.

Natural remedies

- Do not take tea, coffee or cocoa before bedtime. Stop by 4 p.m. These stimulants may keep you awake.
- Hypoglycemia: Ischemia...this may reduce your anxiety about your inability to have a restful sleep.
- Aromatherapy—add a drop of lavender, clary sage, chamomile or frankincense are allowed in your bath or bottom that's are peppermint.

Cure-jest

Pamper yourself with a stimulating scrub. For leftovers of shredded cucumber mixed with low-fat yogurt dry to milk. Apply as a scrub then feel to neck. Good skin remembers: love spotlight!

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HUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMO AND PEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PAMILAAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES CRAKE

MEEN (March 21 to April 19): No person is more easily impossible to stay. Don't make a big deal about inconsequential. Just remember a good argument makes agree. Don't underestimate.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Don't take it personally if a friend is acting funny about a new man and his friendship. The idea one doesn't are a bit freaky makes relationships overwhelmed on.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your ruler is Mercury in the sign of Gemini which is just-talking, the two are vindictive might be hard to deal with. Be wary. But not things will work out fine this week.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a great day to get organized for the week ahead. Be prepared for a last-minute invitation. Pamela Lee's ask to borrow things. People feel emotional and cajole for it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might be overwhelmed by some people who would like to get closer to you. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't let your emotions control you. Be careful you could be a relationship that has more than its share of arguments and discord. Treat carefully.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Don't let someone see you walking in your feminine body. This is definitely a day to spend with who you're girl. This have no other choice.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You feel like you're being taken advantage of by someone today. Don't be embarrassed. Others might suspect you. It's important to be honest with your feelings. It could help you avoid unpleasant misunderstandings. It could help you avoid unpleasant misunderstandings.

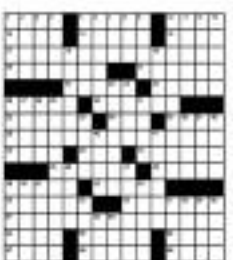
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20): Be patient with your partner. Don't be critical. Jan. 21 you're partner with your loved ones, especially with your parents. Don't know it works.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You should explore new relationships, especially with people from other cultures. It's not too much to be thinking every thing is lovely every time you meet.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Be careful how you spend money today. Don't buy something because you're in a strong impulsive mood and should be sorry.

"When things get tough, use tough go dogged." In the words of an anonymous person.

DAILY CROSSWORD



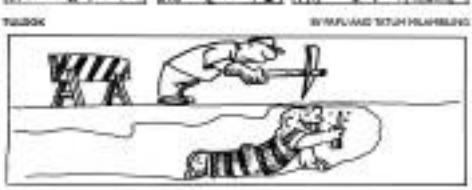
HIRAYA — BY ANDREW TEJADO

BEH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONG.D

TULDOK — BY RAFLAND 'BEUH MUAMBLING



PITOY Moreno and Daisy Payumo. Standing: Ethel Trinket and me!

THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE Hostesses of my tea afternoon birthday party are Fortune Lodronio, Agnes Hufbauthus, Nini Licarus, Nene Leonor and Fe Rodrigues. Standing: Karen Macasaet, Melin Abbas, me, Chit Salud and May Mori

GERMAN Hanna and Michael Fee Trzebiatowski, Becky Garcia, Che Singson and Ana Lodronio

ARLENE Arce and Susan Laudico

EMILY Lopez and Theresa Santos

TERRIBBLE Libero, Carrie Bautista and Mabel Rivera

Another milestone for everyone's 'palangga'

NENA de Rosario, Crisolita Lucnab and Boris Lobregat

BITSY Sanchez and Celine Bautista

ARTURO Lic

BABY de Jesus, Elida Saenga and Susie Kalaging

WITH A HAGGIS, CHILI-INT allowance and a more-than-generous serving of entertainment, Manila Golf Club in Makati, everything was set for my memorable birthday celebration.

The affair was slightly more glamorous than one would expect from a simple get-together of friends, palangga.

Ultra-glamorous emcee Mollie Abbas welcomed the audience with a short speech. "Indeed, Maestro has been a pillar in social circles with his unforgettable style and charm. Maestro has kept many friends over the years who share a deep trust in and loyalty to him after many seasons of social hobnobbing. In fact, this celebration of Maestro's birthday is an affair hosted by some other Maestros named friends."

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Mia Magpayo using **Kodak** EasyShare camera

Once we'd heads appealed. The motifs for this intimate afternoon affair went to the super nice and generous hostess, like my fairy "godsister" Nini Abel, Nene Leonor, Mini Licarus, Grand Melin Abbas, Grand Fortune Lodronio, Fe Rodrigues, Karen Macasaet, Chit Salud and Grand Agnes Hufbauthus. It was through their gracious efforts that next got a memorable birthday bash.

"Happy Birthday, palangga," they shouted across blew the candles to mark another breathful year of my life. Thank God.

'5+4 = 9'

For the famous pallet event, palangga, the greatest star showcased was by a saxophonist or on a track or sometimes was, it fact, his cocktail bash was held at The Palm Beach Seafood Restaurant, The Bar, where Mozart & Handel Corp. celebrated its "5+4 = 9th Year Anniversary."

The company acknowledged, thanked and paid tribute to its business partners, supporters, suppliers and even loyal employees.

In his opening speech, the hot, hot managing director, count Michael L. Cuttaling said, "After nine years, it is indeed an honor and a privilege for us at Mozart & Handel to be considered as the leading pallet rental company and pooling service provider in the industry."

A major highlight of the event, palangga, was the launch of the new model Saxcar EC-20 and the "Saxo Wailed."

Management officials were there to show the lucky winners the kind of prizes. And the winners were Robert Pezarse of DH Logistics, who got a three-day two-night ticket/accessory for two, and Tess Ison from Calgaw Polyester, who bagged a one-day, two-night trip for two to Hong Kong on loss.

LULU Castañeda and Ruby Tuason

HONETTE Guevara and Nini Valera

NEGRE Gamboa, sales and marketing manager, Mozart & Handel Corp.; Michael Cuttaling, managing director, Mozart & Handel Corp.; Ishiel Arevalillano, Manila Pilots, Inc.; Ramon Ian Reyes, operations manager, Mozart & Handel Corp.; Jesus Hernandez, DTI-BPE; and Norma Hernandez, DTI-BPE

BESSY Vergara, Eric Cortes, Cory Quirino and Bobby Peñaranda

CLARENCE Chan, Mozart & Handel, San Miguel-CEMEX Group; Fred Gapasan, Nina Camarong, Ogie Flores, Dang Flores and Pepsy Ignacio

TESSIE Amparo, Tessie Lee, Chit Goho, Alice Briones and Lucy Syquia

PITANG Yangson, Chloe Periquet, Lucille Villanueva and Mini Lanuz

MICHAEL Cuttaling with the DTI-Logistics team: Mercurio Gu, JR Tayag, Ferdinand Lim, Noel Bautista, Bobby Andes and Robert Pearce

Food for thought

AT A CONFERENCE ON AGING, PROMINENT neuroscientist Marian Diamond gave five basic factors for the "successful aging" of the brain. Diet is first and most important, then regular exercise, mental challenges, new processes and human bonding.

Here is what current research suggests as good and bad for your brain.

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Jocson

Smart and dumb fat

Fat may have become a bad word but you shouldn't have much of a brain without it. Nerve cells are covered with a membrane made from fatty acids.

The most important fat for a healthy brain is omega-3 fatty acid, particularly DHA (the most abundant fat in the brain).

Researchers think omega-3 may stimulate nerve cells to produce more BDNF, a protein that promotes and preserves nerve cell growth. Regular aerobic exercise does the same thing.

Fish is truly brain food. Fatty cold-water fish like tuna, salmon, mackerel and sardines are abundant sources of omega-3. Eating three ounces or 100 grams of fatty fish twice a week will supply the brain with needed omega-3. Small specimens of the fatty acid are found in walnuts, flaxseed, seaweed and green leafy vegetables.

Though Omega-6 from vegetable oils is needed for brain health, too much of it can be bad. The ratio between omega-3 and omega-6 should be 1:1.

The worst possible type of fat for the brain is trans fat from partially hydrogenated vegetable oil. This is found in processed foods like cookies, doughnuts, crackers, and snack items like chips and French fries.

A French study found that a diet high in trans fat could change the way electrical impulses (transmitters) thought are conducted. Scientists also believe that trans fat weakens the structure of nerve cells, lessening resistance to strain.

Dumb and dumber

A high-fat and high-sugar diet is a "dumb and dumber diet." Lab rats fed a diet of 30 percent fat (lard and corn oil) and 40 percent refined sugar had lower amounts of BDNF, a protein that promotes and preserves nerve cell growth, than those fed a healthy diet. They performed significantly poorly in maze tests.

Brain researchers Robert Friedland and Grace Ono (ed2746@hotmail.com) first built high fat and extremely low-fat diet ways bad for the brain. They found that people with the Alzheimer's gene, who had a high-fat diet in their 40s were seven times more likely to develop the problem in their 70s than those who didn't have the gene.

But those who ate a moderate fat diet (21-30 percent) reduced their risk by four and a half times.

Brainy carbs

Though glucose, the brain's fuel is made from carbohydrates, not just any type of carbohydrate will do. High-fiber carbs from whole grains are best. They slowly release energy and do not raise blood sugar levels sharply.

It has been found that a rush of glucose from eating refined carbs or sugary food slows down thinking.

To keep the brain's glucose supply steady eat breakfast and a mid-afternoon snack of whole grains, protein, and high-fiber fruits and vegetables. Skipping breakfast or eating a breakfast high in refined sugar and flour leads to poor performance.

Bright rainbow

Eating the colors of the fruit and vegetable rainbow can help combat the effects of Alzheimer's and dementia, according to a new study by the Journal of the American Medical Association. People who ate the most antioxidants have 70 percent less risk of the two conditions. The study recommends eight or nine servings! Half a cup = one serving) daily for optimum brain protection.

Friedland and Perez added that a memory diet felt little room for the minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables.

Spice up your mind

Curcumin, the substance that gives the yellow color to curry made with the spice turmeric, has been found to have brain-protective qualities. According to Science News Online, mice bred to develop Alzheimer's-save less amyloid, the waxy gunk that accumulates in the neurons of many persons in India typically eats such dishes and have half-as-high a suggest that fish curry may just turn out to be the best dish for your brain.

Visit www.tinajocson.com

Mrs. International Life Coach consultant Tina Jocson will talk on "Coaching for Success in Work & Life" June 14-17. Log on to www.diamondcoaching.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Standing back leg lift

TIGHTENS AND FIRMS THE buttocks and hamstrings (the back of the legs)

Equipment:

For greater resistance, use ankle weights or a resistance band about your knees (waist) or around your ankles (harder).

Exercise technique:

1. Take your right leg behind and then forward from the hips while maintaining a straight back. Your arms are lifted in front for balance.

2. Contract your buttocks and move your leg straight back as far as possible without arching your lower back. Keep your abdominal muscles tight throughout the entire exercise. Make sure to keep the supporting knee slightly bent.

3. Return slowly to starting position.

4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Switch to the other leg.

5. Optional: Before switching to the other side, hold the leg in the left, up position and do 10 short quick pulses.

Performance tips:

1. If you want a greater range of motion, lean forward some more. The way you can lift the leg higher and get a greater contraction in the buttocks and hamstrings without having to hurt your spine by overarching it.

2. Always focus on maintaining the hamstrings first before lifting the leg backward.

3. Keep the supporting leg slightly bent.

4. Hold the back of a sturdy chair if you need some help with balance.

Repetitions: Do 10 repetitions per leg.

Unknown Judas revealed

Part I

NEW AND HITHERTO UNKNOWN information has been revealed by Dr. Antonio A. Aquinaldo from the codex called Tchacos about the recently released translation of the Gospel of Judas discovered in the 1970s near Minya, Egypt.

Dr. Aquinaldo, a professor of business administration in a university in Bergamo, has been receiving important spiritual messages through an esoteric writing since 1995 from an entity that calls himself Melchior.

Although Gabbay never identified himself, we suspect he is Archangel Gabriel because he communicates with Aquinaldo only on Mondays and has profound knowledge of the entire world.

In previous messages I wrote about in my book, "More Encounters with the Unknown," Gabbay revealed the connection between the seven psychic centers or chakras (which he referred to as the seven power stations) and the seven Sacraments; the Eight Words of Jesus; the 10 Commandments of God and the seven virtues.

It's been quite a while since we heard from Jun Aquinaldo until Gabbay Pillow the translation of the Gospel of Judas was released by National Geographic Society in April, my former assistant, Frances Gloria, asked: Am I there was anything Gabbay had to say about the controversial manuscript. Gabbay's reply reveals information we found anywhere else and also confirms others already known before.

But let us review what is currently known about the Gospel of Judas before talking about Gabbay's new revelations.

Coptic

The Gospel of Judas is based on a manuscript found in the '70s and brought to light recently by time scholars consolidated by National Geographic. The manuscript, which made its way to the National Geographic team after a circuitous path of sales, counter sales and alleged pilfering, is written in Coptic, the language of the early Egyptian Christians.

It was written sometime around between 220 and 340 AD. Scholars believe it is a translation of an earlier Greek text probably dated between 130and 180 AD.

Catholic Bishop Irenaeus of Lyon, France, referred to the Gospel of Judas in his disorder against heresies in the year 180 AD. So we know there really was such a gospel. We also know there were many other gospels circulating at that time, aside from the four gospels of Luke, Mark, Matthew and John, the only ones officially chosen and approved by the Catholic Church.

The choice was by no means unanimous. More than 100 bishops disagreed with the official stand and they were quickly banished by Emperor Constantine who convened the Council of Nicea in the year 325 AD precisely to define what Christians should believe.

Novelties

In the newly revealed gospel, Judas Iscariot does not appear to be the villain and the betrayer he has always been portrayed in Christian teachings. On the contrary, he seems to be the hero who helped fulfill Christ's mission by delivering him to his enemies.

Judas also appears to be the only apostle who truly understood Christ more than any other apostle. That's why Jesus chose him for that important task. Jesus also revealed to Judas secret teachings about the universe that were not given to the other disciples.

In this regard, Judas shared with Mary Magdalene the unique privilege of being the only recipients of secret knowledge from Jesus Christ. Why Judas was specially chosen to deliver Christ to his enemies was revealed to the message from Gabbay to Jun Aquinaldo on April 17 which would be discussed later.

According to a news report by John Allen Jr. from Rome, "In the roughly 3,000-word text, of which large chunks are missing or indecipherable, Judas emerges as a hero. Jesus says Judas 'will exceed all of them who are baptized,' because Judas 'will sacrifice the man that clothes me,' a reference to the Gnostic belief that the body is a mere set of clothes, and the ransomer of the person is the immortal soul."

What does the Gospel of Judas say about Jesus and his teachings? The website of National Geographic provides some glimpses. In Codex page 37, Jesus is shown to be laughing quite a lot. He is not at all the serious and reserved person portrayed in the official version of the Catholic Church.

Laughing Christ

"In the Gospel of Judas," says National Geographic, "Jesus laughs quite a lot, particularly at the absurdities that distort the rules of human life. And he also laughs at those who don't understand. Judas and the disciples mock offerings as prayers, offering it out because they want to. Jesus laughs because they believe that their God really expects to be praised in such a way."

Who would the son of God laugh at these things? Because the Gospel of Judas is a Gnostic gospel, an early form of spiritualism that focuses on knowledge. Gnostic comes from the Greek word for knowledge. Gnostics believe in personal knowledge, a knowledge of God that allowed them to discuss with him and to communicate directly with him without an intermediary. Such beliefs were in direct conflict with mainstream of the emerging orthodox church, which became a monolithic religious organization in the 4th century.

The Gnostics were persecuted by the dominant orthodox church and their teachings condemned as heretical. Their books burned and destroyed.

In Codex page 37 of the Gospel of Judas, Jesus seems to be criticizing those who preach in the name but whose proclamations lack substance or heartfelt concern."

To be continued.

Next week: More discussions on the Gospel of Judas.